



NICK CARTER WEEKLY

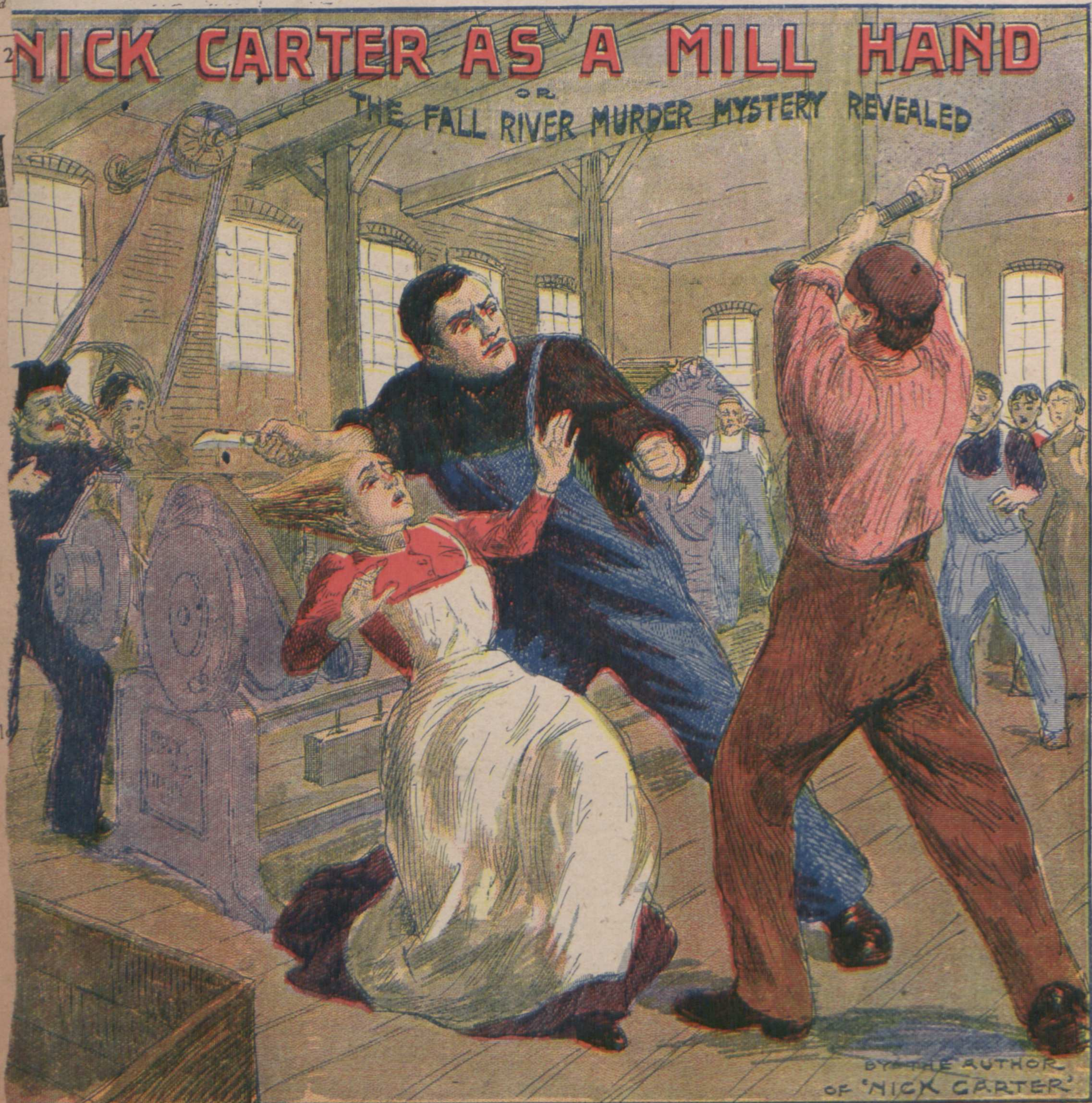
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No. 278.

Price, Five Cents.

NICK CARTER AS A MILL HAND

OR
THE FALL RIVER MURDER MYSTERY REVEALED



BY THE AUTHOR
OF 'NICK CARTER'

NICK CUT THE GIRL'S HAIR WITH ONE SWEEP OF HIS KNIFE.



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NEW YORK, April 26, 1902.

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OR,

The Fall River Murder Mystery Revealed.

By the author of "NICHOLAS CARTER."

CHAPTER I.

WHEN THE DESK WAS OPENED.

"Faith, now, what's that?"

The old woman got on her hands and knees and looked sharply at the carpet.

A dark spot on it had attracted her attention.

It was near the edge of the desk.

"Mud, is it?" she asked herself; "not likely, for that isn't where Mr. Taylor puts his two feet when he's at wurruk. An', bedad, a nater man nivver had an office with its illegant carpet an' its fancy windy hangin's. It's not the likes of him as would come in with muddy shoes an' a thick mat to wipe 'em on at the door. Then what is it? an' won't he be howl-in' mad if I don't clane it up before ivver he comes to business this blessed mornin'."

Mrs. McCarthy got up and started from the room. Broom and dustrag were not enough for this spot of dirt.

She must have soap and water and try to soak it out of the carpet.

It was the office of the Taylor Print Cloth Mills, in Fall River, Massachusetts.

The mills, several in number, were big granite buildings located at some distance from the center of the city.

They were surrounded by a very high fence in which there was a gate for freight wagons and near it a smaller gate for the working people.

All the employees had to pass through this gate whether they worked in the mill near the road or in the one furthest from it.

Within a few feet of the small gate there was a break in the fence that was taken by the office building.

This also was of granite.

It was one-story high, and contained several rooms.

The largest room, occupied by twenty or more bookkeepers, had six windows on the street side.

Doors opened from this room to several smaller ones on the mill side of the building.

One of these was the private office of the president of the company, Mr. David E. Taylor.

It was in there that Mrs. McCarthy, the scrub-woman, was at work early in the morning, so early in fact, that the gate had not yet been opened to admit the employees.

She had swept the big room, emptied the waste-paper baskets, and mopped the floor.

There was little to do in the smaller rooms, for they were not much used.

But she never failed to dust and slick up the president's office, even though there was nothing more for her to do than empty the waste-paper basket that stood beside his big rolltop desk.

On this morning she found that the chairs were not in their usual order.

Some scraps of torn envelopes, too, were scattered on the floor.

Mr. Taylor probably had had a meeting of directors in the office the afternoon before, or there had been other callers.

It was after she had picked up the last scrap of paper that she noticed the spot on the carpet.

When she returned to the private office she had a pail of hot water, a bar of soap and a scrubbing brush.

With these she went to work, and soon had the carpet so wet that she could hardly tell the spot from the water.

But she worked away at it and saw the spot grow less and less plain.

"Bad luck to it!" she muttered more than once, "it's as bad as grease, so it is."

It was impossible to get it all out.

Try as she would, there remained a dark place in the carpet that she knew was not made by her soap and water.

At last she gave it up, and rubbed the carpet dry with a rag.

"Mr. Taylor won't be here for three or four hours yet," she said, for she was always talking to herself, "an' by that time it will be dried up an' p'r'aps he won't notice. Anyhow, I've done me best, so I have."

The small gate in the fence outside had been opened before she finished, and men, boys and girls were crowding in to begin their day's work.

As she was about to leave the office building, the superintendent came in.

"Ah! Mrs. McCarthy," said he, "you're late this morning."

"It's not late I was in gettin' to me wurruck, Mr. Jackson," she retorted, "but it's late I do be in finishin' it."

"Can't work so fast when we get old, can we?" he asked, good-humoredly.

"Go on wid yees for an impidint spalpeen!" she cried; "I'm young enough to be yer daughter, an' I'm younger than I was this day twinty years ago, so!"

The superintendent laughed.

"You min who make believe wurruck here," she went on, pretending to be angry, "do be cuttin' up such didos that ye'll break me back clanin' up after yees, so ye will!"

"Didos!" he exclaimed, "why! what do you mean? what's happened?"

"How do I know?" she replied, with a wise wink. "An' would I be tellin' if I knew? Ah! yees min, yees min! ye're a bad lot, ivvery one of yees, so ye are."

And with this shot she left him.

Mr. Jackson laughed again and thought no more about her words, for he knew as well as anybody that there wasn't a more orderly office in Fall River than that of the Taylor Mills.

He liked to hear the old woman talk, and he was willing enough that she should have her joke and the last word.

The looms in the factory buildings began to buzz, the small gate was shut, and the superintendent went to one of the mills where some new machinery was being put in.

An hour later the bookkeepers arrived.

They went to their desks and began work in the usual way.

The head bookkeeper looked over the mail brought by the postman, and laid about half of it on the shelf of the president's desk.

He did not notice the spot on the carpet, but then, he was not an observing man.

His head was full of nothing but figures.

Some of the letters that the head bookkeeper opened proved to be on business that it was necessary to speak about to the president.

These he laid in a pile by themselves to wait until Mr. Taylor should arrive.

A little after nine o'clock a man came and asked to see Mr. Taylor.

A boy who had a desk near the door took his card and went to the president's private office, only to return in a moment with word that Mr. Taylor had not arrived.

"I'll wait for him," said the man; "he sent me word that he would see me at this hour."

"He's due now," remarked the boy, as he showed the caller to a waiting-room.

A little later the head bookkeeper gathered up his letters and went to the private office.

He stood there a moment, frowning.

"I thought he had come in," he muttered, and went out again.

Fifteen minutes passed, and still the president did not come to business.

One of the directors called to see him, and went into the private office to wait for him.

After waiting a few minutes he came out and

asked the head bookkeeper impatiently where Mr. Taylor was.

"I don't know," was the reply; "he hasn't come in yet."

"Perhaps he's ill," suggested the director; "have you telephoned his house?"

"Not yet, sir."

"Then do so now."

The head bookkeeper a moment later had the president's wife in conversation over the wire.

"He didn't come home last night," she said; "he had some work to do at the office, and said he might take the late train for Boston. I suppose he did so, but he said he should return on the first train this morning."

This was reported to the director, who took out his watch.

"The first train from Boston has been in more than an hour," said he. "Twice time enough for him to get here. I should have supposed that he would telegraph if he missed the train."

The man who had called earlier to see the president came from the waiting-room.

"Ah!" said the director, shaking hands with him, "you have come to wind up the matter we were talking about yesterday."

"Yes," replied the caller. "I wish Mr. Taylor was here. I want to get away."

"He'll be here soon. Come into his room."

They went in together.

The director tried the big desk, but the cover would not come up.

"I thought so," he remarked. "He keeps it locked. I thought that if he had happened to leave it unlocked I could get the paper you want and we could finish the business without him."

There was nothing to do but wait, and they sat down.

Almost immediately the director saw the dark spot on the carpet, for the sunlight happened to fall there.

He stooped over it.

"Odd!" said he.

"Somebody spilled the ink?" asked the caller.

"Don't look like ink. It don't amount to anything, of course, but Mr. Taylor is so very neat that he will be annoyed by it."

He sat down and tried to talk of ordinary matters, but somehow he couldn't keep his eyes off that dark spot, and he couldn't help wondering what made it.

The head bookkeeper came in.

"I have a telegram——" he began.

"From Mr. Taylor?" interrupted the director.

"No, from New York. It needs an answer at once and I know what the answer should be."

"Well, why don't you send it?"

"Because it's in Mr. Taylor's desk. There's a paper in the third right-hand drawer that should be got into the mail without a moment's delay."

"Then we must manage to open the desk. I'll take the responsibility."

He went once more to the desk and tried to raise the rolltop, for no drawer could be opened until that had been pushed up.

"I suppose we can pry it up," he said; "better send the boy for the engineer and a chisel."

"Oh!" said the head bookkeeper, "I have a key——"

"Then bring it at once!"

The head bookkeeper went to his own desk and returned with a key that he put into the lock of the president's big desk.

The two others stood by while he turned it.

"Mr. Taylor told me," remarked the head bookkeeper, "to open the desk whenever it was really necessary to get anything there."

The lock clicked and the head bookkeeper put both his hands on the lower edge of the roll to lift it.

It stuck.

After raising about an inch it stopped.

Something seemed to be in the way.

"Push along," said the director, "the wood has probably warped."

The head bookkeeper did as he was told,

With a violent push he rolled up the cover and then suddenly drew back with a gasp of horror.

The other two men started back also, their faces ghastly white, their voices choking.

There was the president whom they had been waiting for, lying upon the top of his desk.

His head was bent upon his breast, his legs were doubled at the knees.

There was a dark red stain upon the papers near his head.

"My God!" gasped the director, "Mr. Taylor has been murdered!"

CHAPTER II.

"THAT REMINDS ME," SAYS NICK CARTER.

For a moment they stood and looked, too horrified to take action.

At last the caller whispered:

"That explains the spot on the carpet."

"Yes," returned the director, with a glance at it; "it is human blood, Mr. Taylor's blood."

There was another moment of awful silence.

Then all three looked suddenly at each other, and the director uttered the question that was in the mind of each:

"Who could have done it?"

"Perhaps," suggested the head bookkeeper, then, "he has not been fatally injured."

This was most improbable, but it spurred them to action.

The director went to the desk and felt the heart of the president.

It was still.

"The body is stone cold," he said, in a low tone, "but we must have a doctor here—and the police. Telephone."

In another moment the main office was thrown into excitement as the men at work there heard the dreadful message that the head bookkeeper told over the wires to the police station and the nearest doctor's office.

The excitement lasted a long time, for the doctor

came and declared that Mr. Taylor had been dead for many hours, not less than six, probably as many as ten, and possibly twelve.

He examined the spot on the carpet with a microscope, and tested it with chemicals.

Human blood, he announced, but evidently something had been done to it.

It looked as if an attempt had been made to rub it away.

That seemed of small importance, and yet the police, who came soon after, declared that it must be investigated.

So Mrs. McCarthy was sent for to tell what she knew.

She told of trying to wash the stain out without suspecting what it was, and the police let her go with a warning that she must stay in Fall River until called for.

As the good woman had no idea of going away, the warning simply frightened her.

"What would I be running away for?" she demanded, and as nobody answered her, she immediately began to think that perhaps it would be as well to hide for a time.

The doctor found a deep wound upon the back of Mr. Taylor's skull, and there were bruises elsewhere.

Evidently there had been a hard struggle with his enemy.

"He must have been a man of great strength," said the police officer who had charge of the case, "for Mr. Taylor was no weakling."

Mrs. McCarthy had told how she found the chairs out of order and scraps of paper on the floor.

"They probably knocked the chairs around while struggling," said the policeman, "and after it was over and the murderer had hidden the body in the roll-top desk, he set the chairs in order as well as he knew how."

"Do you suppose," somebody asked, "that he hoped the crime would remain undiscovered long?"

The policeman shook his head. He didn't know, and he didn't care to guess.

Questions were asked about Mr. Taylor's habits.

It was learned that when he had work to do in the office at night he always locked himself in.

There was a watchman, of course, employed to make the rounds of the factory buildings.

He was now asleep, but a messenger was sent for him in a hurry.

The watchman was found at his home, aroused and taken to the factory office.

"I made the rounds just as usual," he said. "Mr. Taylor came down to the office about eight o'clock.

"I saw him when he went in and spoke to him."

"Was he alone?" asked the policeman.

"He was."

"What did you say to him?"

"Nothing more than 'good-evening, sir.'"

"Did he reply?"

"Yes."

"What did he say?"

"'Good-evening, James,' said he, and went in."

"Was that all?"

"Yes, sir."

"How long was he at work?"

The watchman gave a glance at the body that had been laid upon the floor.

"Good Lord!" he gasped, "how can I tell? Ain't he here now?"

"Yes, but you didn't see him go away?"

"Certainly not."

"Well, then, how long was the light burning in this office? You could see it, couldn't you?"

"I could. I saw it every time I made the rounds."

"Well, at what hours did you pass the office?"

"A few minutes after every hour. I make my start from here. There's an indicator that I have to ring at the side of this building at five minutes past every hour."

"Go out and look at the indicator," said the officer in charge to the policeman.

"Go on with your story," he added to the watchman.

"The lights were burning when I passed at nine, and again at ten."

"Did you see Mr. Taylor either time?"

"No."

"Were the lights burning when you came along at eleven?"

"They were not."

"Well?"

"Well, what?"

"What did you do?"

"Nothing, of course. I went about my duties. supposed that Mr. Taylor had gone home."

"But didn't you try the door to the office building?"

"Oh, yes, of course. It was locked all right."

The policeman who had gone to examine the indicator came and reported that apparently the watchman had made his rounds as he said.

In fact the indicators from all over the factory buildings showed that he had been faithful all through the night.

"Did you see or hear anything unusual in the course of the night?" asked the officer.

"Not a thing, sir."

"Nobody passing the mills?"

"Oh, well, when it comes to that, I saw two or three men in the evening."

"That may be important."

"But it happens every night. People pass the mills on their way home."

"Did you know any of those you saw?"

"Yes."

"Name them."

The watchman did so.

Then one of the directors spoke. All of them had been sent for, and they were in the private office with the police.

"It isn't likely," said this director, "that the murderer would let himself be seen, and it is certain that he got into this building after work hours."

"Sure?"

"Yes, for Mr. Taylor and I were the last to leave it yesterday afternoon. We left nobody behind, and we left the outer door locked."

A policeman was sent to examine the windows along the street side.

He reported that none had been tampered with.

The front door, too, was all right.

"Then," said the officer, "Mr. Taylor let the murderer in himself."

"That's almost impossible," responded the director.

"Why?"

"Because, to get in, the caller would have to ring a bell or knock very loudly. His knocks probably would have been heard by the watchman, and his ring certainly would, for at night the bell is connected with gongs all over the factory buildings."

"Very well," said the officer, "the man got in with a key."

This statement gave everybody a shock.

Who had keys to the office building?

The question was promptly asked and as promptly answered.

Mr. Taylor himself had one, and his key was found in his pocket on a ring with many others.

The superintendent had one, and took it from his pocket when it was asked for.

Mrs. McCarthy had one. She had used it that morning.

The head bookkeeper had one, and with trembling fingers he took it from a ring and handed it to the officer.

"Any more?" asked the latter.

No; that was all.

Four keys had been made for the outer door when the office building was put up some twelve years before.

These were the four keys, none ever having been lost.

The officer looked thoughtfully for a moment at the key given him by the head bookkeeper, and then passed it back.

"You may keep it," he said, "but we may call for it again."

* * * * *
The finding of Mr. Taylor's murdered body caused

a great sensation, not only in Fall River, but in distant cities, for the victim was wealthy, widely known, and the circumstances of the crime were deeply mysterious.

Newspapers had long accounts giving such information as has been told here.

In that way the affair came to the attention of Nick Carter.

"By jove!" said he at breakfast one morning.

He laid down his paper and took up his knife and fork.

"What's up, boss?" asked Patsy.

"Mysterious murder in Fall River," was the reply.

"What! another one?"

"Yes, and a hummer! Look it over."

He passed the paper to Patsy.

Before the young man had finished reading, Chick came in and read an account in another paper.

Nick said nothing until they were through.

"Does it interest you?" asked Chick.

"In a way," replied his chief, "but not because it looks like a hard problem. It may be one, of course, but it wouldn't surprise me if the next edition had news that the murderer had been arrested."

"Why does it interest you, then?"

"Because it reminds me of a case we had a little while ago."

Chick and Patsy both went for their papers again and began to read.

"Guess I haven't waked up yet," said Patsy, after a moment. "I don't see that it's like anything we've had recently."

"I didn't say it was."

"But——"

"I said it reminded me."

Nick waited a moment, watching the puzzled expressions on his assistants' faces, and then asked:

"What was our very last case?"

"Ghouls," answered Patsy.

"Right. And Chick, I'm sure, hasn't forgotten the name of the man whose face he copied for the purpose of fooling old Professor Drummond."

"No," said Chick, "it was Dick Taylor."

"Well, the murdered man's name was Taylor."

"Is that all?"

"All that reminds me? yes. I can't help wondering——"

The great detective paused and did not finish what he was going to say.

"I see what's in your mind," said Chick. "Dick Taylor got away. You are wondering if he has shown up again in this crime."

"That's it. We know that his people were rich, and that his father is dead. And that's about all we do know about him except that he's a crook, and not a very smart one at that."

"He may be smarter than you think," suggested Chick.

"Sure."

"He's smart enough to get away," said Patsy.

"That's right, too, and I would like to get him just for the satisfaction of locking him up, but I thought he was hardly worth a chase because he had nothing really to do with the grave-robbing case, and because we've locked up the men who really did the crooked business in the swindling operations that we worked on."

They finished breakfast without discussing the Fall River affair further.

Then Chick remarked that that case was one which the local police ought to clear up easily.

"I don't know," responded Nick, thoughtfully; "it starts out with a pretty strong mystery unless the papers haven't got all the facts. I think that I'll take a run up to Fall River unless the evening papers have news that the police are on the right track."

The evening papers had nothing new about the case.

There were long stories, but they were mere theories of the reporters or a rehash of what had been printed in the morning.

"That settles it," said Nick. "I'm going to look into that matter even if I turn round and make for home to-morrow."

That night he was a passenger on one of the Fall River Line steamboats.

CHAPTER III.

THE REPORTER'S ADVENTURE,

"Why, hello! hang me 'f 'tain't Misser Carter! How do, Misser Carter. Hic!"

It was nearly midnight. The steamboat was on the broad Sound and Nick had thought himself alone on the hurricane deck.

Certainly for nearly an hour there had been no other passenger in sight.

The moon was shining; the detective was not at all sleepy, and he leaned against the rail, looking down at the water and smoking a cigar.

He had not turned when he heard steps coming unsteadily along the deck, but at the sound of his name he looked around and shook hands with the man who addressed him.

"How are you, Billy," he responded.

If he really wanted to know there was no need of asking, for the young man's tongue was thick; he swayed as he stood there, and he smiled in a silly way at the detective.

It was a reporter, Billy Dingley, whom Nick had known for years.

A right clever fellow was Billy; there was nobody on the New York papers with a sharper nose for news, nobody who could stick longer to a hard story than he; no one whose judgment was surer as to the truth of what men told him.

Often it had been said that Billy would make a good detective, and the remark was true enough but for one thing.

A man can't chase crooks successfully if he crooks his elbow.

Every now and then Billy would hold up a bar too long and get, as he was at this moment, too full to attend to his business.

For this reason he often lost his place, but he was such a good fellow, he always promised so earnestly to reform, that he was taken back just as often.

At least once a week his city editor would call him up and say:

"Now, Billy, here's an important case. Do for heaven's sake keep sober and give us a good story."

And Billy would promise faithfully. Generally,

that is about nine times in ten, he would keep his promise.

Then he would go all to picces and his paper would get left.

Nick had met him on a good many important criminal cases, and liked him, as did everybody.

Besides that, there had been times when Billy was really useful to the detective.

Any information he had got on his own hook he was always willing to give up to Nick, and in return Nick always gave him a good story when he could.

The detective had also found that Billy could keep a secret. If Nick said, "I'll tell you this, but I don't want you to print it till I say so," he could be sure that Billy would keep mum.

"I'll betcher, Misser Carter," said Billy, "I'll betcher a dollar to a paper collar—hic!—paper collar—paper collarollarollar—he-he! will ye take ze bet, Misser Carter?"

Nick couldn't help laughing.

"You mean," he responded, "that you'll bet a dollar to a cruller, don't you?"

"Nope," giggled Billy, "dollar, doll—doll—dollar—ollarollar to a col—col—collarollarollar——"

Here the reporter stopped to laugh until he cried at his own nonsense.

"Well," said Nick, "I'll take the bet for the sake of finding what it's about."

Billy tried to pull himself together.

"I betcher," he said slowly, "you'n' I are on the same case."

Nick didn't laugh any more. He was sober enough for both.

"What case are you on, Billy?" he asked.

"Why! mysht'ry, Fall Riv' mysht'ry. Old stiff found in a roll-top deshk, head broke, p'lice blind as bats—betcher Nick Carter was shent for, eh?"

"I guess you owe me a dollar, Billy," said Nick, "but, as I couldn't have paid you a paper collar if you had won, we'll call the bet off. Come here."

He took the young man by the arm and walked him to some chairs that were placed where they got all the wind made by the boat.

"My city editor," remarked Billy, as they went along, "says to me, 'Billy,' says he, 'want you to go to Fall Riv' an' hang the murd'rer.' So I'm going."

"And the first thing you did was to get drunk," said Nick.

"Yep. I'm full as a tick, but I'll be all right to-morrow."

"No you won't, and you know it."

They sat down. Billy was going to dispute the detective, but Nick's tone made him uncomfortable, and the rushing, cool wind sobered him a little.

"I'll brashe up to-morrow," he said. "Won't take a drop."

"You'd better not."

Nick was thinking of a way to make Billy useful, but he knew that it was useless to talk to him in his present condition.

"Have you got a room?" he asked.

"Of courshe," said Billy.

"Then you go to it now and sleep off your jag. I'll talk to you about your case in the morning."

"Then you were shent for!" exclaimed Billy, thickly.

"No, I wasn't. Don't make any mistake about that, Billy. I haven't been sent for. I'm traveling for pleasure, but I may be able to give you a point on your case in the morning."

"Now, Misser Carter, now! I can think straight enough."

"Nonsense! go to bed. Hustle along, now. I'll see you in the morning."

"All right, then. Jush 's you say, Misser Carter. You're a frien' of mine, an' I'll do what you tell me to."

Billy got up and staggered to the stairway.

For a moment Nick sat watching him.

Then the young man lurched so violently that the detective got up and followed quietly, fearing that the reporter might fall and get hurt.

But Billy kept his feet all right, and went down to the deck below and into the long hallway that was lined with staterooms on both sides.

Nick saw him feeling his way, for the lights were low, and evidently Billy could not see the numbers on the doors very clearly.

Then another man appeared on the scene, and his actions instantly made the detective suspicious.

He pretended to stop for a drink at the water cooler and watched.

The man spoke to Billy, and Nick heard him suggest a drink.

"All ri'," Billy responded, "jus' one more, but I guessh the bar's closed."

"Never mind," the man said, "I've got a bottle of good stuff in my room."

He opened a stateroom door and both went in.

Nick was troubled.

Was this an old friend of Billy's, or was it a chance acquaintance picked up in the barroom of the boat?"

It didn't look right.

The detective went along the hall and paused by the door of the room they had entered.

He heard Billy's voice. The reporter was laughing, and the other man apparently was filling a glass.

"It's no business of mine," thought Nick. "If Billy gets drunk that's his affair. I don't mean to make a fool of myself by interfering."

But the detective did not go away.

He remained near the door, listening, and feeling more anxious every minute.

He was not trying to hear the conversation.

It would have been impossible if he had, for the voices were low and he could hear no words.

Before long the murmur of voices ceased.

Billy, probably, had taken just one drop too much and had fallen asleep.

Nick felt desperate. His suspicions were all aroused.

"I may be mistaken," he said to himself, "but I'm going to take the chance."

With no further hesitation, he drew back as far as the narrow passage would permit and made a charge against the stateroom door.

He stooped and brought his shoulder against it near the lock.

All his giant strength was exerted, for he did not want to have to make a second charge.

That was not necessary.

The bolt tore away the lock and the door swung inward, carrying the detective half across the little room.

He was stopped by the body of the stranger, Billy's friend.

The man was stooping over the lower berth, on which the reporter lay sound asleep.

At the very instant Nick broke in, the stranger's hand was in Billy's vest pocket, drawing forth a roll of bills.

The reporter's watch had already been placed in the thief's pocket.

He turned with a terrified face at the sound, of

the smashing door, but before he could stir Nick had him by the throat.

Holding him thus, the detective reached to the wall and pressed the button for a steward.

Then he whipped out a pair of handcuffs and fastened the fellow's wrists.

Billy's money was still clutched in the thief's hand.

And meantime Billy slept without stirring.

"You infernal scoundrel!" exclaimed Nick, taking his hand from the man's throat, "it'll be a long day before you do business again."

The man gasped for breath.

"I was only going to take care of his stuff," he muttered. "I was afraid somebody might steal it."

The detective laughed scornfully.

"Can't you think of anything better than that?" he said.

Just then a colored man, a steward, came to the door.

"Lord a massy!" he exclaimed.

"Charley," said Nick, quietly, "you see what has happened."

He pointed to the thief's hand and then took Billy's money from it.

"Done been a robbery!" said the darky.

"Not quite, but pretty near it."

Nick tucked the money into Billy's pocket.

"Now, Charley," he added, "can you hold a revolver?"

"Yassah."

"Can you fire one?"

"I s'pose so, sah. Nebber tried. I s'pose I could pull de trigger."

"I suppose you could. Well, Charley, this revolver has a hair trigger. Give it a touch and bang she goes. Understand?"

"Yassah."

Nick was showing one of his best weapons to the darky.

"I've got to put this sleeping man in my room," continued Nick, "and then tell the captain about it. I want you stand guard over this duffer till I come back."

He passed the revolver to the darky, who took it as if he was horribly afraid of the thing.

"It won't hurt you," said Nick, "if you keep the business end pointed at the fellow on the floor."

He then propped the thief against the corner.

"Plug him, Charley," he added, "if he stirs or says anything. Understand?"

"Yassah."

The darky was trembling, but he held the revolver pointed at the thief, who trembled also.

"Say!" he protested, "don't leave that fool nigger with me. It will be murder if you do."

"All right," replied Nick, grimly, "it will serve you right. Don't let him talk, Charley. I'm an officer, and I tell you it will be all right if you have to shoot."

"Yassah."

The darky was more confident now that he saw the thief was frightened.

Nick was sure that the two could be left for a few minutes, for the thief was white with fear.

He wouldn't have stirred or spoken for anything.

The detective picked up Billy and carried him from the room and along the passage to the room that Nick himself had engaged.

He put the reporter on the lower berth, locked him in, and hastened to find the captain.

After explaining what had happened, Nick said:

"Of course, you see that I am a detective, but I would rather not let you know just at present who I am. If the thief or anybody else asks questions, give it out that the boat carries a regular detective, and have it understood that I am that man."

"Very well," replied the captain, "it shall be as you say, and the company will be obliged to you for preventing a crime. We have a lockup on board, and I will have the thief put in it."

They went down to the stateroom with two other of the boat's officers and found the darky and the thief as Nick had left them.

Apparently neither had dared to stir.

Nick pulled the thief to his feet.

"We'd better search him," he said, and the captain agreed.

Among the things taken from his pockets was a gold watch.

"I think," said Nick, "that I know that watch. My friend's name is William Dingley. Open the case."

The captain did so, and found the reporter's name engraved on the inside.

He handed the article to the detective.

"Is there anything else here that belongs to Mr. Dingley?" the captain asked.

There was nothing, and the officers took the thief to the lockup.

"We shall have to hand him over to officers on shore," said the captain.

"Well," responded Nick, "you touch at Newport. That is in the State of Rhode Island. Can't you drop him there?"

"Certainly."

"Do so, then. I will run down to Newport during the day and make the necessary complaint against him."

In this way Nick saved himself from making his identity known in Fall River.

As soon as the thief had been disposed of he went to his own stateroom, where Billy was still sleeping.

"Dope, of course," thought Nick. "I wonder if the event will be a lesson to him? He ought to let liquor alone."

So thinking, he climbed to the upper berth and soon was asleep.

CHAPTER IV.

A CALLER AT HEADQUARTERS.

Nick was awake early.

He went on deck when the boat stopped at Newport, and saw the thief put off there.

Then he went back to his room and waited until Billy awoke.

That was not until some time after the boat arrived at Fall River.

Billy looked around stupidly, wrinkled his brows when he saw Nick sitting in front of him, and at last said:

"Why! you're Nick Carter! Have I been arrested for something? I'm not guilty, on my word, I'm not."

The detective smiled.

"How do you feel, Billy?" he asked.

"Rocky," was the reply. "You haven't got such a thing as a glass of brandy and soda in your pocket, have you?"

"Can't say that I have. Do you know where you are?"

Billy tried to think.

He had forgotten all about meeting Nick the night before; forgotten the man who invited him to drink; forgotten his business.

"I could pull myself together if I had some brandy," he muttered.

"Better think a little first. What did your city editor tell you yesterday?"

"I don't know. Confound it! I suppose it's next week and that I've let the paper get beat on something or other. Tell me where I am, Mr. Carter, and I'll try like the devil to get my head down to business."

"You are in Fall River."

"Fall River!" What the——"

Suddenly Billy remembered and he sat up.

"Jerusalem!" he exclaimed, "the Taylor murder mystery! Has that been solved yet, Mr. Carter?"

"I don't know."

"But you're on the case?"

"No. You thought last night that I was, but I told you that I had not been sent for."

Billy looked around.

"I see," he said; "I'm still on the boat. Is it late in the day? I must get a bracer and look after the news."

He leaned his head on his hands and groaned.

Nick then told him what had happened.

"I'm awfully obliged to you," said Billy. "I'm a fool to get into such shape. Gee! how my head aches! It doesn't seem as if I could drag myself through the work I've got to do, but I must."

"You can't."

"Yes, I can! A stiff dose of brandy——"

"Will start you off again, Billy. I know. Now, see here, my friend, I told you that I had not been engaged on this case, and that's the truth, but I don't mind taking a look at it. I'll tell you what I'll do."

The detective was so earnest that Billy looked up wonderingly.

"You're in no shape to do your work," Nick continued, "and your paper will get left if you try. If you'll let me I'll do your work for you."

"What!"

"I'll ask the questions, get the facts, and fix up your story for you. You can sign your name to the dispatch, and there you are."

"You! You, Mr. Carter? You don't mean to say you will turn reporter?"

"Why not? Are you afraid I can't do the work?"

"Afraid? huh! I should say not. You could beat any of the boys in New York hands down if you tried, but it don't seem right. I haven't done anything to deserve it."

"No matter. I shall enjoy it. Better let me take your place, Billy, while you get a room at Wilbur's Hotel and sleep."

"Oh, I can brace up, honest Injun, I can!"

Billy stood up, but his legs shook and he staggered against the wall.

Then he sank upon the berth again, looking very white and sick.

"You see," said Nick.

"Yes," he answered, weakly, "though a good, stiff drink would bring me up. But I'll do what you say. You seem to want to do the thing for some reason."

"Yes, and of course you won't give it away that I'm on deck."

"You bet I won't."

"Then I'll borrow your face and I'll turn you into a drummer or anybody you choose except a reporter or a detective."

Nick got out his make-up box from his grip and, while Billy sat there looking on admiringly, turned his face into the exact image of the reporter's.

"It will hardly do," he remarked, "for a pair of twins to leave the boat. So I'll give you a little disguise that won't be uncomfortable, and if you're in good condition by to-morrow morning you can take it off and go to work for yourself."

Billy's disguise was quickly finished, and he went to his own stateroom to get his grip.

When he parted from the detective it was with the understanding that he would take a cab to Wilbur's and not leave the hotel during the day.

Nick promised to call on him there in the afternoon or evening and "fix up" the story for his paper.

The detective had his breakfast on board the boat, and looked over the Boston morning papers to see if there had been any new developments in the murder case.

Apparently there were none of great importance.

The police had examined a great many persons, but seemed to be as much in the dark as ever.

After breakfast Nick went up to police headquarters, and, having announced himself as Mr. Dingley and mentioned the reporter's paper, he was soon in conversation with the chief.

"I think we've met before," said the chief.

"Yes," Nick answered.

"Didn't you come up some years ago when we were working on the Borden murder?"

"I did."

"I thought I remembered you. You haven't changed much, Mr. Dingley. Well, what do you want to know?"

"All about it."

"I wish I could tell you, for that's what we want to know ourselves. The morning papers have all there is."

"Well," said Nick, "I read something about an examination that had been made of Mr. Taylor's desk."

"Yes, we thought some of the papers he was at work on might furnish a clew to a quarrel, or some other reason for the crime."

"I believe you found his will."

"Right. It was in a drawer inside the roll-top. It bore the mark of a bloody thumb."

"Indeed! That's a clew."

"It could be if we could find the man with the thumb that fitted the marks, but the trouble is that the lines of the thumb are not to be seen."

"How so?"

"The murderer evidently saw his danger and drew a blotter across the bloodstain in such a way that it is only by using a microscope that you can tell that it was a thumbmark at all."

"Too bad."

"Oh, well, I don't know. We've got to catch our man first."

"But there's a clew in the fact that the will was touched at all. It shows that the man went through the desk."

"Yes, and it proves instantly that no member of the family could have committed the murder."

"I don't quite see that."

"Don't you? You would if you were a detective or a police officer, Mr. Dingley. Suppose it had been somebody who was interested in the will."

"Well?"

"In that case the will would have been stolen, destroyed or tampered with. It was let alone, just taken from the drawer and put back again. Evidently, you see, the murderer didn't care anything about the will."

"Yes," said Nick, very dryly, "that's plain," and he pretended to write in his notebook.

"So you see," the chief went on, "we've got to look for the guilty man outside the members of the family."

"Sure, and I understand that there is somebody under suspicion, somebody who had a quarrel with Mr. Taylor."

"Was that in the papers?" demanded the chief.

"In one of them."

"I didn't see it, and I told the boys to keep it dark."

"Well the thing has been printed. What about it?"

"I am sorry it was printed, but I guess it won't make any difference. We can have our man when we want him. He is an assistant boss of one of the weaving-rooms. It is known that he had high words with Mr. Taylor, and that Mr. Taylor threatened to discharge him."

"Ah! Now we are getting at it," and Nick pretended to take more notes.

"What is his name?" asked the detective.

"John Gleason; but you'll keep that to yourself, Mr. Dingley, until later in the day."

"Oh, certainly. What was the trouble between him and Mr. Taylor?"

"Something about the work. Mr. Taylor was a very particular man, and his bosses often thought he interfered with them without reason. He would make a run through the mills and find fault, you know."

"I see; and he found fault with Gleason."

"Yes, and Gleason was fool enough to talk back."

"Where is Gleason now?"

"One of our detectives reported that he went to work this morning just as usual, but of course that might be a blind, you know."

"Sure."

At this moment a doorman came in with the word that somebody wanted to see the chief, and he handed the chief a card.

"Well!" exclaimed the chief, under his breath, "that's rather surprising. Tell him to come in."

Then he turned to Nick.

"You needn't go, Mr. Dingley," he said. "I remember that you are a sensible reporter and a safe man to trust. This man may have something to say about the case. So you can sit still and listen."

"Thank you, chief," replied Nick.

The door was then opened again and in walked the one man whom the detective wanted to see.

It was none other than Dick Taylor, the crook whom he had run across in two previous cases.

The very man of whom Nick had thought when he first read of the Fall River murder mystery.

CHAPTER V.

THE DETECTIVE-REPORTER STRIKES A TRAIL.

Taylor looked very solemn when he came in.

He glanced inquiringly at Nick, who had taken a chair by a window and was apparently reading a newspaper, and then spoke to the chief.

"You hardly remember me, I suppose," he said.

"Well," replied the chief, "it's some years since I saw you, and we were never well acquainted, but I remember who you are. You've been away a long time, Mr. Taylor."

"Yes," the young man responded sadly, "I had to sow my wild oats—like a fool!" He added, with great bitterness.

"How long have you been back?"

"I arrived only this morning. I went straight to my uncle's house and heard the awful news there."

His voice trembled, and he pressed his handkerchief hard to his lips.

"You hadn't heard of it!" exclaimed the chief.

"No; I was traveling—on my way from Chicago, and I missed the papers. It is a frightful blow!"

"It must be."

"Of course I came right down here to see if there was anything I could do."

"I don't see that there is, Mr. Taylor. The police are doing all in their power."

"I believe you, and I understand that you have a clew, or that you suspect——"

"Yes, we hope to be justified in making an arrest before the day is over, but we mean to be cautious and get all the evidence possible first."

"That is right, but you won't let the suspected man slip out of your hands, I hope."

"Decidedly not! If he should make the least effort to get away, our men would clap the handcuffs onto him instantly."

"I am glad to hear that."

Taylor reached into a pocket and took out some letters.

"This is an awful surprise," he said, as he looked them over and selected one. "You will see that I had good hopes when I started for Fall River."

He handed the letter to the chief.

"I wish you would read it," he added; "it is from my uncle. Of course, it won't interest you much, but I feel as if I wanted to talk to somebody about it."

The chief nodded and read the letter. As it was shown to Nick a little later it may be described here.

It was from the murdered man, and written on the paper used by the officers of the factory in all their correspondence. It was dated four days earlier, and began with a reference to some letter that Dick had written.

Then it went on:

I have heard many unpleasant stories about your manner of life, but have never believed that you had done anything really criminal. If I had believed so I should have cut you out of my will long ago, but I have hoped that you would come to your senses some day. So it seems that you have run through the money your father left you, and that now you are anxious to reform. Very well, Dick, if you are in earnest, I'll give you a chance. You will have to buckle down to steady, hard work, but I will make it an object for you to do so. Come to Fall River at once. I will make you an assistant superintendent in the factory, for I know that you have not forgotten the business. You will get the ordinary salary, but if you prove by six months of steady work and good behavior that you are in earnest, I will take you into the company and give you twenty-five thousand dollars as a quarter advance on the legacy that I mean to leave you when I die. I do hope, my dear nephew, that you are in earnest and that we shall hear no more bad stories about you. Your affectionate uncle,

DAVID TAYLOR.

The chief handed back the letter when he had read it.

"You must have got this," he said, "on the day when your uncle was killed."

"It seems so," replied Taylor, in a low voice, as he looked at the Chicago postmark. "On the very evening, in fact. I packed my grip and started on the midnight train, coming through without delay."

"Well, I can understand that you feel pretty badly, but you may be sure that we shall do everything possible to catch the murderer."

"I am sure of it, chief, and, if I had means, I would offer a reward——"

"No need of that, but, as far as your having means is concerned, I guess you don't understand your own situation."

"Why, what do you mean? I am penniless. I had to borrow some money of a good fellow in Chicago to pay my railroad fare."

"You'll have no difficulty about returning it."

"How so?"

"We had to look through your uncle's desk, and we found his will. Of course, we had to read it. You're down in it for the hundred thousand he mentions in the letter, and you come in for some of the mill stock besides."

Taylor stared as if speechless.

"You don't mean it?" he gasped.

"I do; every word."

"Ah! poor uncle!" choked the young man, and he put his handkerchief to his eyes. "How generous!"

"He certainly meant well by you."

"He did, indeed. I must go now. I suppose I shall find all the directors at the factory?"

"Probably."

"I must let them know that I have returned. So I will say good-morning, chief."

"Good-morning, Mr. Taylor."

The young man went out, and without waiting for Nick to ask questions, the chief said:

"I guess young Dick Taylor has led a pretty fast life, but he seems to be in earnest now."

"Evidently," Nick answered. "What was the letter he showed you?"

The chief told him what he could remember of it.

"Odd that he should come back just at this time," said Nick.

"It will make a good story for your paper, eh?"

"You bet! I'm glad you let me hear the talk. And now I must go down to the scene of the crime."

"All right, Mr. Dingley, but be careful not to give away anything I've told you."

Nick gravely gave his promise and went out.

From the moment that Dick Taylor walked into the chief's room, the detective was certain that he was the murderer.

There were some things about the situation to puzzle him, but his keen mind quickly saw a reason in Dick's apparently dangerous course.

The young man's name had not appeared in the newspapers in connection with either of the other cases in which Nick had run against him.

Therefore, Fall River people could not be supposed to know that he was an actual criminal.

So he was safe from arrest, so far as they were concerned, and he undoubtedly believed that Nick Carter would not be called into the murder case.

"Perhaps," thought Nick, "he has a scheme for

fastening the guilt upon somebody else, and so making it seem unnecessary for the local police to call for outside assistance.

"He has worked the thing more cleverly than I thought he could.

"How careful he was to set up his *alibi*! There was no good reason why he should show the chief that letter which he said he received in Chicago on the night of the murder.

"But he showed it, and the chief was taken in—but, of course, the chief had no reason to suspect him.

"Why should I suspect him?

"Well, because I know him to be a crook.

"I could arrest him now for crimes that I could prove against him, but they don't amount to anything compared to murder, and I must lie low till I get the evidence that will convict him of this crime.

"Now, what is the evidence against him?

First, his own interest. By killing his uncle he makes sure that he will not be cut out of the will.

"The murderer saw the will. That much the police discovered, but they reckoned wrong.

"Dick had no reason to destroy the will, because it did a great deal for him.

"Now, how am I going to prove that Dick murdered his uncle?

"There isn't another scrap of evidence against him.

"In fact, when we come right down to it, the only thing against Dick Taylor is my suspicion.

"And that confounded letter! Was it really sent to Chicago? Of course, Dick wasn't there to receive it.

"But, perhaps, somebody sent it on to him.

"That would mean that he has a confederate.

"Well, I must keep my eyes open, that's all. Something will give me a clew to work on."

While he was thinking it over thus, Nick was on his way to the Taylor mills.

Reporters of other papers were there when he arrived, and he joined them in a visit to the office to ask some questions of the superintendent and other officers of the concern.

There is no need to repeat the questions here, for nothing of importance was gained from them.

The superintendent, however, did give out the information that young Mr. Richard Taylor had returned unexpectedly, and all the reporters made a note of the fact.

"Mr. Richard Taylor," added the superintendent, "will probably take hold of the work here at the mills, as it was his uncle's wish that he should do so."

"Will he take his uncle's place?" asked a man from Boston.

"Not at present," was the reply. "He hasn't had experience enough for that."

"What will he do, then?"

"Go into the factory as one of my assistants and learn the business thoroughly."

Nothing was said about Dick's shady past.

Nick quietly talked of that matter with the Fall River reporters. They told him much the same that the chief of police had done, that little had been known of Dick since he ran away from home years before.

"He hit a pretty hot pace," said the reporters, "but his father left him quite a lot of money just the same. It is supposed that he went through that, and some people say he has been crooked, but nobody knows. I guess the worst he ever did was to gamble pretty freely."

Nick knew a good deal about Dick's gambling, but, of course, he kept his information to himself.

At this time, that is when the reporters were getting their information, Dick was in the mill office with the directors.

Most of the reporters went away before noon, but a few remained, and among them was Nick Carter. He was waiting to get a sight of Dick.

A loud whistle blew and the rattling of the machinery in the big granite buildings died away.

The doors opened, and hundreds of employees came trooping out on their way to dinner.

They passed through the little gate near the office. Superintendent Jackson stood in the office doorway.

Before the first of the employees passed out, Dick came from inside the office, and stood by the superintendent.

Nick and the reporters were a few feet distant.

It had leaked out that a boss named Gleason was under suspicion.

Some of the reporters had heard the fact, and they were the ones who remained.

They wanted to get a sight of Gleason, and they hoped that he would be arrested on leaving the mill. That would be something to write about.

Nick, too, wanted to see Gleason, but he was more interested in watching Dick Taylor.

He kept his eyes on the young man without appearing to do so. Apparently, he was watching the employees.

About two hundred had passed through the gate when Nick's quick eye saw a girl start and turn a little from the line in which she was walking.

No one else noticed her action.

The detective saw that her face paled.

He saw that, as if in spite of herself, she turned her eyes toward the office door.

She saw Dick Taylor looking at her.

The man was motionless, but his eyes glowed savagely.

The girl shuddered, bent her head, and hurried on. That was all.

Just a quick glance between a man and a girl.

But Nick Carter no longer waited to see Gleason.

He strolled away and kept the girl in view until she had entered the house where she lived.

Then he idled in the neighborhood for a few minutes, getting into pleasant conversation with an old man, and helping a small boy mend a broken top.

From the old man and the small boy he learned that the girl's name was Mary Finnerty, and that she worked, as he knew, in the Taylor mills.

"They say there isn't a better weaver there," was one of the things the old man said.

The small boy gave this piece of information:

"She's got a feller, too."

"So?" responded Nick, patiently putting the broken top together. "Is he a good one?"

"H'm! h'm!"

"Good-looking?"

"Yep. Girls think so."

"They ought to know, eh? Is he rich?"

"I guess so. He makes as much as eighteen dollars a week now."

"That's a good deal."

"It's more'n my dad gets."

"Ah! and what is this wealthy young man's name?"

"John Gleason."

The boy was so tickled with Nick's skill in mending tops that he forgot to thank him.

The detective went to the telegraph office and sent a dispatch to his clever lady assistant, Ida Jones.

It began with Mary Finnerty's name and address.

"Take next train," it said, then, and nothing more.

Ida would know that it was her duty to shadow this girl.

After he had sent the message Nick took a train to Newport, where he entered his complaint against the thief who had started to go through Billy Dingley.

By the middle of the afternoon he was back in Fall River.

CHAPTER VI.

BILLY MEETS A FRIEND.

The detective made it his first business to "fix up" Billy Dingley's story.

He made another visit to headquarters and learned that John Gleason had been arrested.

Of course the man protested his innocence.

Reporters were not allowed to interview him.

This was the chief news of the day, and, after he had got all the facts that the police would give out, the detective went to the Wilbur House and wrote.

Nick had taken a room under Billy's name, and the real reporter had signed the book as M. E. Brown.

When he went into the hotel he inquired for Mr. Brown.

"Will you send up a card, sir?" asked the clerk.

"No, I don't care to disturb him," Nick replied. "I simply wanted to know how he is."

"He went to bed as soon as he arrived," the clerk told him, "and hasn't been down since."

"Let him rest then. When he gets up, tell him Mr. Dingley wants to see him."

"Very well, sir."

So, for the next two hours, or more, the detective was busy writing for Billy's paper.

In the meantime, Billy did not call at his room.

"He ought to be all right, after such a long sleep," Nick thought.

When the dispatch for the paper was ready, he went to Billy's room and knocked.

Feeling a little anxious for his friend, Nick went down to the office and inquired again for Mr. Brown.

"He hasn't showed up yet," said the clerk, with a smile.

"Then I'm afraid there's something wrong."

"So! why?"

"I have just been to his room, and could get no answer to my knock."

The clerk looked serious.

"Think he's dangerously ill?" he asked.

"I hope not, but it would be well to see."

The clerk looked at the letter-box of Billy's room.

"His key isn't here," he said, thoughtfully, "so he hasn't gone out. I will send up to his room and have it opened."

"Let me go, too, please."

"Certainly, Mr. Dingley."

The clerk sent a boy to the housekeeper to get the duplicate key to Billy's room.

When this had been obtained, Nick and the boy went up together.

They knocked loudly first, and then opened the door.

The room was empty.

On the floor was Billy's grip where he had dropped it the minute he got in.

The bed was mussed up, showing that he had taken Nick's advice to the extent of lying down.

On the table drawn close to the head of the bed was a seltzer siphon, a tall drinking-glass and several smaller glasses, all empty.

"My friend had something to drink," remarked Nick, pointing to the glasses.

"I should say so!" responded the boy, with a grin; "he kept me running between here and the bar for an hour and a half after he got here."

"Brandy?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well," thought Nick, "I am afraid his jag will last to the end of this case. I must try to find him, but there's other business to do first."

He told the clerk that he guessed Mr. Brown had gone out without being seen, and then he went to the telegraph office.

Two or three New York reporters were there writing away for dear life.

They had come up by train in the morning, and had not arrived in Fall River until after midday.

One of them spoke to the detective.

"Hello, Billy," he said; "I heard you were here."

"Yes," Nick responded, imitating Billy's voice, "I left the city last night."

"Did you hear that they've arrested the murderer?"

"John Gleason?"

"Yes."

"Yes, I've got that. Anything new since six o'clock?"

"Nope. They won't let us talk with Gleason."

"So I understand."

"Have you got anything new, Billy?"

"Not since six. I've been writing."

"Huh! and you're ready to send your story."

"Yes."

"I wish I had been sent up last night. I've got to grind for hours before I'm done."

"Sorry for you. I'll let you know if I hear anything."

"Good for you, Billy."

The reporter went on with his work, and Nick signed Billy's name to his dispatch.

Then he handed it to the telegraph operator and went out.

He had received a cipher dispatch from Ida, saying that she was on the way, and would arrive late in the evening.

"She must get to work without delay," Nick thought, "and I will see if I can fix things so that she can do so. I'll engage a room for her in the house where Mary Finnerty lives."

"I wonder what has become of Billy?"

Now, this is what had become of Billy:

He had gone to Wilbur's, meaning to do exactly what the detective had told him to.

For several minutes he had lain on the bed, too weak to undress.

His head ached furiously, and there was a horrible dryness in his throat.

"Can't stand this," he decided; "I'll stay in the room, but I won't suffer."

So he rang for a siphon of seltzer and a glass of brandy.

These articles were brought, and they were followed by others, as the bellboy had related to Nick.

After that Billy had no trouble in sleeping, and he was dead to the world until nearly evening.

When he awoke he had a hard time of it trying to make out where he was.

There was his grip on the floor, and there were empty glasses near the bed.

How they came there, he couldn't remember.

The setting sun was shining brightly in at a window, and he got up with the idea that he would look out and see if he could recognize the neighborhood.

On his way across the room Billy chanced to glance into the mirror on the bureau.

Then he thought he had 'em for sure.

Billy didn't know himself.

That ought to be his image looking at him from the mirror, but the fellow in the mirror had a beard!

"Am I Rip Van Winkle up to date?" he muttered, "or is it just ordinary jimjams?"

He went to the bureau, leaned his hands upon it and looked sharply at his image.

He was a little scared.

"That ought to be me," he whispered, shuddering, "but it isn't! I never grew a beard. Poh! I don't believe it's there. I'm seeing crooked—or somebody is looking over my shoulder!"

Quite startled at this thought, he turned about suddenly.

Nobody was behind him.

He looked again at the mirror and slowly brought his hand to his face.

It was a beard!

He could feel it.

With a chill of real fright, he yanked at the hair and pulled most of it off.

It hurt some, for Nick had glued the beard on to make it look natural and also to stand a good deal of rubbing; for the detective had thought that Billy might turn over in his sleep, and so disturb the disguise.

The reporter got enough of the beard off to know his own face, and then he remembered.

"By thunder!" he muttered, "Nick Carter was with me, and he put up this job for something—what was it? Oh, the Taylor murder mystery! Gee! what a fool I am."

He couldn't recall all the facts at first, but he remembered dimly that Nick was doing his work.

"He took my face with him," thought Billy, "and left me another. I must put this beard back again."

He tried to do so, but the hair wouldn't stick, of course, for the gum was stiff.

For several minutes he worked away at it, but only made matters worse the more he tried.

"No use," he said at last; "better nothing than such a blotch. I'll scrub the whole thing off."

So he washed his face and succeeded in removing most of the traces of the disguise.

The cool water helped clear his thoughts, but he was far from being sober.

In fact, Billy was very drunk, but he didn't know it.

He felt pretty well; wanted a drink, of course; but he could walk straight, and he imagined that his head was clear.

His hand went as far as the button on the wall to call for brandy.

Then he felt ashamed as he saw the empty glasses.

"What a tank I am!" he reflected. "Mr. Carter might come in any minute. I should hate to have him see so many signs of my jag. I won't have any more."

He sat on the bed and tried to think, but in five minutes he was pacing about the room.

Billy was horribly restless.

He wanted a drink, and he wanted to go somewhere, he didn't know where; but just any old place to get away from this room that began to seem like a prison cell.

His mind was clear enough to see that it might be very dangerous to the detective's plans for him to go out.

Now that the beard was gone, he was Billy Dingley again.

Two Billy Dingleys in town would be too much of a good thing—"and not such a very good thing, either," he laughed.

But he had to go out.

There was no escape from it. He could get a drink at a barroom and slip back in five minutes, feeling better.

He went out, locked the door behind him, and roamed around the passages in the hotel until he found a back door.

Nobody saw him, and Billy chuckled as he thought he had done a very smart thing.

As he had not gone through the office, there was no danger that the double Dingley would be noticed.

It was growing dark now, but he saw the lights of a saloon not far away, and he made for them hurriedly.

It was a combination bar and restaurant.

There were booths along one side of the room separated from each other by half-partitions.

Each booth had a table set for supper.

That reminded Billy that he hadn't had anything to eat all day long.

He wasn't hungry, but he decided that he would order supper.

A drink had to come first, and, of course, one wasn't enough.

It was a pretty good load that Billy took on before his supper was brought to him.

And, as luck would have it, before he had finished a New York reporter whom he knew came in.

By that time there wasn't much left of Billy's judgment, and that little flew to the winds.

"Hello, Billy," said the newcomer. "Got your story done?"

"No," said Billy, hesitating and smiling queerly.

The newcomer then saw that Billy was full, and spoke to him seriously.

"I say, old man," he said, "you'd better pull yourself together and do some hustling. This is an almighty important story, you know, and you don't want your paper to get left."

"Paper's all right," responded Billy.

"But why don't you do your story? I heard you were around early in the day. You must have got your facts hours ahead of the rest of us. Why don't you get down to work now and write?"

"Don't need to."

Billy chuckled as he saw his friend's astonishment.

"There's a discharge coming to you, Billy," said the friend.

"Betcher a dollar to a paper collar there ain't. I got a substitute."

"A substitute!"

"Yep. A corker, too. He'll write a better story than two of me could, even if I was sober, which, between you and me, I ain't."

"Don't need to tell me that! But who's your sub, Billy?"

For one instant more Billy hesitated. He had a confused notion that he was doing wrong, but it was too good to keep. It wasn't every New York reporter who could get Nick Carter to substitute for him.

So he leaned across the table, and he thought he lowered his voice. For a fact, he spoke even louder than before.

"It's a dead secret," he said, "and you mustn't give it away. The great detective, Nick Carter, is doing my work for me."

"What! Nick Carter on the Taylor murder case?"

"No, Nick Carter ain't on the Taylor murder case, but he's doing Billy Dingley's work on it, just the same."

"But that means that he's working on the case. Do you suppose he'll get evidence and not use it?"

"No, I don't; but that's his business. He's just took my place, that's all I know. We fixed up the deal on the boat this morning. I presume he's sent my story already. I'm not worrying."

"Well, you're in luck! But I hope Carter won't get a lot of exclusive news, and scoop the rest of us."

Billy chuckled.

"He'll take care of the news all right, all right," said he.

That was all they said about it, but it was enough for a man who had come in just before that part of the conversation began.

He stood at the bar waiting while a cocktail was being mixed.

At the mention of the name "Nick Carter," he started slightly, and, as the conversation went on, his face paled.

With his glass in his hand, he turned a little and looked at the two young men in the booth.

It was a very sharp glance he gave Billy Dingley.

The face he saw was imprinted on his memory, and he had seen it before on that day.

First, in the office of the chief of police.

This man's face was the one he had seen there.

Again, this man's face had been among those who appeared at the mill offices to ask for news.

He could not forget it now.

The man set down his glass and paid for his drink.

When he went out, which was immediately, his eyes were burning and his cheeks were ghastly white.

CHAPTER VII.

NICK GETS THE BENEFIT OF BILLY'S SLIP.

Mary Finnerty lived on a street that ran down a steep hill toward the bay.

It was lined on both sides with double granite houses, and nobody but mill hands lived in them.

The houses were set rather close together, but they did not quite join, a narrow alley being left in every case.

As a rule each house held either two or four families, but the one in which the Finnerty girl lived was a boarding-house.

Nick called there and asked to see the landlady.

She came to the door, but did not invite him to go in.

"I'm looking for a boarding-place," he said.

"Well," she responded, "you've come to a good one, if I do say it as shouldn't. Do you work in the mills?"

"No. I'm not looking for myself."

"Oh!"

"My sister is coming to Fall River to take a place in a factory, if she can find one——"

"She'll have to pay in advance, unless she gets a job."

"That will be all right. The question is have you got room for her here?"

"Yes, there's rooms enough. Will you look at them?"

"No, thank you. She will be here soon, and she can see for herself."

"All right, sir. What is her name?"

"Julia Wilson."

"Very well; I'll take care of her, but she'll have to pay in advance."

Nick said again that there would be no trouble about money, and started back to the hotel.

He had gone but a few steps from the boarding-house, and was passing one of the narrow alleys mentioned, when he heard a light, swift movement at his side.

Instantly he began to turn, for the sound aroused all his suspicions.

He was too late, or, rather, the attack was too suddenly made for him to avoid it.

A terrific blow landed square on his head, and he went reeling to the middle of the street.

His foot struck a loose stone, it rolled, and he fell full length.

The man who had struck him—there was only one—was following up his advantage quickly.

He was close beside Nick when the detective fell.

"At last!" he hissed between clinched teeth, and raised his arm.

A knifeblade flashed in the dim light of street lamps.

The blow descended just as Nick reached the ground.

There was a sharp ting! as the blade struck something metallic, and the steel snapped in two.

Nick had reached for his revolver the instant he felt that an attack was coming.

The blow came so swiftly that there had been no chance to use the weapon, but the detective held it up as the knife came down.

The point struck the weapon near the handle.

It may be that the would-be murderer did not know that at first.

He drew back and leaped away, running back to the sidewalk and getting behind a tree.

Nick could have shot him as he went, but he did not raise the weapon.

He lay perfectly motionless.

"So, Dick Taylor," he was thinking, for he had caught a glimpse of the man's face, "you are doing your own dirty work this trip. You haven't got anybody in Fall River to help you."

Things wouldn't have happened as they did after that, if it had been any other man than Nick Carter who was struck down.

Another man would have shot when he had the chance.

Probably any other detective would have made an effort to arrest the criminal.

Nick let him go.

The reason is simple, but the wonder is that it should have come to Nick in that moment of peril.

Dick Taylor had murdered his uncle, but at that moment there wasn't a particle of evidence against him.

To arrest him might, and probably would, prevent the getting of the necessary evidence.

"Let him think he's safe from me," was Nick's thought, "and it will be easier to trap him."

This question also flashed upon Nick's mind:

How had Dick Taylor discovered his identity?

They had met in plain daylight, and Taylor had not seemed to recognize him.

But Nick gave little thought to that matter while he lay motionless in the street.

He was watching for a second attack.

Taylor, too, was watching, trying to see if there was any sign of life in his victim.

"Is he killed, or is he merely stunned?" was the question that worried him.

He looked at his broken knife, and wondered if the point had been left in the detective's breast.

If so, ail was well.

Turning a little, he tossed what was left of the knife into the alley behind him.

"He must have struck his head against a stone,"

he thought, and he started to draw near his victim to make sure.

The sound of approaching steps caused him to draw back.

He stepped into the dark shadow of the alley and waited.

A man came slowly down the hill.

He halted an instant when he came opposite Nick, started on again, and then stepped into the road.

With a cautious look all around, he went to the detective and poked him with his foot.

"Wake up!" he said in a low, hoarse tone.

The detective did not stir.

Again the man looked around.

Then he stooped and peered sharply at Nick, who lay with his eyes staring and his lips parted.

There was a little spot of blood on his brow where he had been bruised in his fall.

"God!" gasped the man; "he's dead!"

Taylor heard the words.

The man reached hastily for Nick's vest pocket.

His fingers felt something soft.

He pulled it out, looked all around again, and hurried down the hill.

He had robbed the "dead man" of five dollars.

Taylor saw the act, and smiled his satisfaction.

Then he softly retreated up the alley, and a few minutes later came out upon another street by a back way.

Meantime no others came along, and the attack had been made so silently that none of those in the houses near had heard anything.

Nick waited until he was sure that Dick Taylor was far away, and then got up.

He dusted his clothes and put away his revolver.

Going under a street lamp, he looked at his watch.

"Ida is due at the station in half-an-hour," he said to himself. "There will be time to make a little search for Billy."

He rubbed his handkerchief hard over his face, and quickly removed every trace of his resemblance to the reporter.

As he went up the hill he disguised his face with a heavy beard and changed the lines of his mouth.

A few minutes later he walked into the Wilbur House office.

A number of newspaper men were there.

So was Dick Taylor.

The latter had come in but a minute ahead of Nick.

He was talking with the clerk, who, it seemed, had been a friend of his years before.

Of course, they were talking about the murder, and Dick was as solemn and sorry as when he talked with the chief of police.

The newspaper men, too, were talking of the murder.

Their work was done, but they were not at all agreed as to the solution of the mystery.

Some were sure that Gleason was guilty.

Others pointed out the probable fact that the murderer had let himself into the office-building with a key.

"Gleason couldn't have had a key," they said.

"Well," suggested one, "Mr. Taylor might have forgotten to close the door. If it was unlocked, what was to prevent Gleason from walking in?"

"He is the only one who has been shown to have a motive for the crime," said another.

So they argued, and Nick pretended to examine a railroad time-table for a moment, to listen.

Presently, one of the reporters laughed.

"The fact is, boys," said he, when they turned inquiringly to him, "we fellows are probably in the soup as far as this case is concerned."

"What do you mean?" they asked.

"It's too good to keep," he answered, "and, anyhow, we ought all to know it, so that we can get our heads together and keep from getting left."

"Don't be mysterious."

"I won't. The only man who's got the straight steer on this case is Billy Dingley."

"How did he get it?"

"By putting up a job with Nick Carter."

"Nick Carter!"

"The same. He's a shrewd one, Carter is. He's working on this case, and nobody knows it—that is, nobody except Billy, and now the rest of us. We'd better keep it to ourselves, I suppose, but Carter is likely to spring a story of the crime any minute that will make us look like thirty cents."

"Great Scott! how did it happen? Do you mean to say that Carter is playing reporter?"

"Yes," and the young man went on to explain what he knew about the arrangement.

But Nick did not wait to hear more.

He did not care to listen to Dick's conversation with the clerk.

So he went upstairs and knocked at Billy's room.

A thick voice answered with something like a grunt.

"Open the door, Billy," said Nick.

He had his hand on the knob, and when he turned it the door opened.

Billy had not locked it.

The reporter was lying fully dressed on the bed.

He was too full to get up, but he recognized Nick when the detective pulled aside his disguise.

"H'llo, Miss'r Cart," he murmured. "Sen' my shtory yet?"

"Yes, Billy," answered Nick, patiently, "the story is on the wire."

"Zat's all ri', then. Mush oblige', Miss'r Cart."

He closed his eyes and snored.

"No use to talk to him," thought Nick, rather sadly, "but he's got to be put in a safe place. If Dick should see him, he might murder him, in order to be sure that he got the right man."

The detective was not angry.

He was very sorry for the reporter—that was all; but he had no notion of taking any more risks with him.

"Billy," he said, shaking him, "can you walk a few steps?"

"Not unlesh theresh a drink at the end of the walk," mumbled Billy.

"Well, there isn't, so I'll carry you."

Nick took him in his arms and Billy was too full to ask why, or resist.

The detective carried him along the passage to his own room, and laid him on the bed.

Then he went back and got Billy's hat and grip.

That done, he locked the reporter in.

"Now," he said to himself, "Billy can't get out to a barroom and he can't get a drink in the house, unless they send for duplicate keys, and I think he'll be safe from Taylor."

He turned back and re-entered the room. It was to write a note and leave it where Billy would be sure to find it when he waked. It read:

DEAR BILLY:—You are in my room. Stay here unless you want to get into trouble. You have let the cat out of the bag. I don't lay that up against you, but I shall be unable to do your work any longer. I will see that you are let out of this room in time to get the news. Yours, N. C.

Nick then went to the railroad station and met Ida Jones.

He told her what he knew and suspected about the case, and went with her to the boarding-house.

"I have no idea how much this Finnerty girl knows about the matter," he said, "but we must find out."

This was said while they were passing the spot where Nick had been attacked.

Next moment they were at the house door, and, while they were waiting there, Mary Finnerty came hurrying up.

Nick quietly nudged Ida.

She understood, and gave the girl a look so as to know her again.

Mary went into the house when the landlady opened the door, and did not answer when the latter asked her a question about John Gleason.

"Well," muttered the landlady, "John won't stay here to-night, but I don't believe he done it."

"This is my sister, Julia Wilson," said Nick, and, after he had paid a week's board for Ida, he left her there and went at once to the house of Mr. Jackson, the superintendent of the Taylor mills.

CHAPTER VIII.

WHAT MARY FINNERTY KNEW.

Ida Jones looked at all the vacant rooms in the boarding-house before she chose one.

This gave her an opportunity to find which room was used by Mary Finnerty, and, as there was an empty one next to it, she took that one.

The landlady gave her a lamp and left her.

"Everybody else in the house," said she, "except me an' you an' Mary Finnerty is asleep by now, for we have breakfast at six. I've been sitting up for you more'n an hour."

"I am sorry if you're tired?" Ida responded.

"Oh, it doesn't matter. I dunno that I could ha' slept anyway what with thinking and worrying over Mary."

"Mary Finnerty?"

"Yes."

"What's the matter with her?"

"Nothing, ye might say, and everything, too. Her lover's been took up for murder."

"Dear me! how dreadful!"

"Ye may well say so, miss. It's bad enough that

there should be murder, but it's worse when they take up a likely young feller who wouldn't harm a fly, even if he has a bit of temper. Who hasn't? I wouldn't give the snap of me finger for a man without some temper, would you, now, miss? John's a good boy. Works hard, he's smart, Mary thinks the world of him, and they were going to be married next month."

"Then you don't think he's guilty?" asked Ida, when the landlady stopped for want of breath.

"Not I, nor anybody else that knows him. Good-night, miss."

"Good-night."

Ida spent a few minutes unpacking her traveling-bag after the landlady had gone.

Then she blew out the light, and went to the window for a moment.

She wanted to see what was outside, and knew that this could be done better if there was no light burning in the room.

The room was up one flight of stairs and at the back of the house.

Leaning out, she saw that there were two windows between her room and the one at the corner by the alley.

On the other side there were three windows.

"I'm as near the middle of the house as they could make it," she thought, carelessly.

The ground below was plainly a clothes yard, and there was a row of sheds at the back.

It was a very dark night, but she could see as much as this, and it was all she wanted.

The window was open from the bottom.

Ida was about to turn away when she saw a dark form skulking across the yard, keeping close to the fence, and the line of buildings.

She watched it curiously.

That it was a man was clear enough.

He softly opened a shed door and took something out.

Then he stood still for a moment.

He seemed to be looking up at the back of the house.

Ida was interested.

She drew a little away from the window, so that there should be no possibility of his seeing her.

A moment more and the man moved slowly toward the house.

Then she saw what he had taken from the shed.

It was a short, light ladder.

He placed one end on the ground and the other softly against the house wall.

The top end rested on Ida's window sill.

"Well, well!" thought the brave girl. "I'm going to have a caller so soon. I wonder who is doing me such an honor?"

She did not stir from her place, but she took out her revolver and was ready for what might happen.

The man climbed the ladder.

As his head came level with the window sill she saw that he was heavily masked.

Ida let him come up two rungs further.

Then, when one hand had been laid on the sill of her window, she grasped it firmly.

With her other hand she pressed the cold muzzle of the revolver against his forehead.

"Excuse me," said she, in a cool, low tone, "but haven't you come to the wrong room?"

The man started, but made no sound, except that his breath came in gasps.

Evidently he was trying to see who she was, and it was equally evident that he was horribly alarmed.

For a second or two he was too paralyzed to stir.

Then he tried to jerk away his hand.

Ida held on grimly.

"You might at least tell me your name, or leave your card," she remarked. "I might like to talk to you."

He muttered a fierce oath, and suddenly kicked the ladder from under him.

As it fell, his whole weight came upon the hand that Ida held, and it was, of course, too much for her.

She leaned quickly out of the window and saw him stumble a bit after reaching the ground, and then dart into the alley.

"Well," she thought, "that visit was undoubtedly connected with the murder case, but I don't believe Nick would have wanted me to shoot that man."

She heard the landlady stirring. The woman had heard the noise of the falling ladder and the man's running.

"What's the matter?" she called through the house.

Everybody was waked up, but the only person who knew anything about the disturbance said nothing.

After some little excitement, the people quieted

down, and the ladder was not found until the following morning.

* * * * *

The superintendent was asleep when Nick arrived at his house, but the detective rang the bell and pounded at the door until Mr. Jackson put his head out of a window and demanded to know what was wanted.

"Something important concerning the murder," said Nick.

Mr. Jackson came down, then, and let him in. Nick explained who he was.

"Unknown to your mill officers and the police," he said, "I have been looking into this case, and I can place my hands on the guilty man. I need a chance to get evidence that will convict him."

"Well," responded Mr. Jackson, "I shall be glad to do anything I can to help you get the evidence, which seems rather weak, but we have already got the guilty man."

"Pardon me, you have an innocent man locked up."

"You don't believe it!"

"I know it!"

"Then who——"

"I cannot answer that question, but I will say that there's a girl in the factory who knows something about the matter. I want to be employed in the factory for a day or two, so as to watch her."

"Do you refer to Mary Finnerty?"

"I do."

"The police suspect just what you do. Gleason is her lover. They have been examining Mary this evening, but can get nothing from her."

"But will you give me my chance?"

"Oh, yes, certainly, if you think you can act like a laborer."

"I will pretend to repair a machine."

"Very well; I'll look for you when we open in the morning."

"And you will say nothing?"

"Not a word."

Mr. Jackson kept his promise, and Nick, dressed as a machinist, went to the mill gate at seven in the morning.

As he went in he saw Ida and the Finnerty girl coming up the street together.

"We'll find out between us," thought the detective.

The fact was that Ida had become acquainted with

Mary, and asked her to show her the way to the mill, so that she might ask for work.

Meantime, of course, she was trying to win the girl's friendship.

Nick pretended to work in the room where Mary was employed.

She tended a large machine in one corner of the room, and often she was out of sight for a few seconds.

But she was at work all the while. Nick noticed that all the other employees disappeared in the same way now and then.

Partly for this reason, he kept close to her.

He didn't want to lose sight of her for an instant, if possible, and all the while he was studying her.

Before long, Dick Taylor appeared in that room.

He had gone to work in the factory according to the plan suggested in the letter from his uncle.

The directors had told him to wait a while, but, no, he was bound to do at once what his generous uncle had asked him to do, and so there he was.

Nick saw that he was eyeing the Finnerty girl, and that, little by little, he was getting over to the corner where she worked.

At last he was beside her machine.

She saw him and turned white, shrinking away as he approached.

At that moment Nick was concealed behind another machine that he was supposed to be repairing.

He saw Dick pass the girl without a word, and then, when her back was to him, he gave her a shove.

With a scream that could not be heard above the rattle of the machinery, she stumbled forward.

She fell against the machine and her loose hair caught in it.

Instantly, it was taken into the machine, and her head was drawn close to it.

Another second, and she would be pounded to death by the iron monster.

The detective was up in a flash.

He had seen the peril the moment the girl was pushed.

There was less than a second to spare.

In half that time he was beside her, with an open knife in his hand.

Nick cut the girl's hair with one sweep of his knife, severing every strand completely.

Then he drew her away from the machine and dropped her to the floor.

There was no time to lay her down gently, for Dick, who had turned and witnessed the rescue, was coming at him with a heavy piece of iron raised to strike.

Nick was just in time to ward off the blow.

He caught the scoundrel by the throat and threw him to the floor.

Mr. Jackson came running up.

"There's your murderer," said Nick, quietly, as he stood up.

Dick lay writhing on the factory floor, with his wrists in steel bracelets.

Mary Finnerty had fainted.

She was taken to the office, and Nick led Dick there, also.

Dick stormed furiously against the detective, and some of the directors who were present were for letting him go, but Nick simply said: "Wait till the girl revives and see what she has to say."

When Mary could speak she was at first too frightened to tell anything; but, after Nick and Ida—for whom he sent—had calmed her, she told a story that settled all doubts.

On the night of the murder she had gone after supper back to the mill and waited in a dark place for her lover, John Gleason, to come.

Gleason did not know that she was waiting for him, but she knew of his quarrel with Mr. Taylor, and she was afraid he would go to the office and have another scene which would lead to his discharge.

And Gleason did go to the office, just as she had feared.

But, before he had rung the bell, she had laid her hand on his arm and was begging him to go away.

He listened to her, at first unwillingly, but at last she made him see that the best way was to let the matter pass and keep his job. He promised to go home and stay there, and he wanted her to go home, too, but she was afraid to trust him.

"I'm afraid you'll come back," she said, and, after he went, there she staid, waiting for Mr. Taylor to put out the lights and leave the building.

Shortly after ten o'clock, she saw a man go to the building and open the door with a key.

She had gone quite close, thinking that it might be Gleason. It was not. The man was Richard Taylor.

He did not see her, and she went back to her dark hiding-place again.

In about twenty minutes the lights were put out, and she started for home.

As she was passing the office door, it opened, and one man came out, and again it was Richard Taylor she saw.

He saw her this time, and he grasped her savagely by the arm.

"Girl!" he hissed in her ear, "never say you saw me here! If you do, I will kill you."

Mary was terribly frightened. She feared not only for herself, but for her lover.

So she said nothing, not even when at last her lover was accused. Knowing him to be innocent, she hoped that the truth would come out without her telling it.

When Dick heard this story, he broke down and made a long confession. The letter that he had shown the police was not written by David Taylor.

Dick had written it himself, and had cleverly drawn imitations of postmarks to show that the letter had been received in Chicago on the night of the murder.

He had got into the building with a key that he had made secretly years before when his father was alive. He had always kept that key, thinking some day that he might rob the safe in the office.

On the night of the murder he had walked in and found his uncle with his will in front of him. He was looking it over, intending, as he told Dick, to have his lawyer change it on the following day so as to cut off his wicked nephew.

The murder followed almost instantly.

That night Dick walked to New Bedford, and staid there till his appearance before the chief of police.

It was Dick, too, who had tried to climb into Ida's room.

He thought it was Mary's room, making a mistake of one window in the darkness.

It was his plan to murder Mary, for he feared he could not keep her silent.

His confession cleared away all the mystery of the case, but it did not save him from the penalty of his crime.

He was executed on the gallows three months later.

After the arrest Nick went to the Wilbur House and called on Billy Dingley.

The reporter had just waked up and read the detective's note.

He was awfully ashamed of himself, and, for a long time afterward, was not known to drink a drop.

THE END.

Next week's issue (No. 279) will contain: "Nick Carter and the Kidnaped Heiress; or, The Recovery of a Great Ransom." The Carters were kept busy. Their next case, which was a strange one, took them to another part of the country.

FIFTY PRIZES

FIFTY PRIZES

There is a good chance for every boy in our new

Funny Story Contest

YOU ALL KNOW what rattling funny stories we printed in the contest that has just closed. It was a corking contest, and we are going to follow it with another of the same kind. You have just as good a chance in this contest as any other boy in America, whether you entered the other contest or not. We want

MORE FUNNY STORIES

Think of the funniest story of which you have ever heard, or the best joke. Write it out and send it to us—then look out for funny stories. We are going to publish in this contest some of the best side-splitters that ever came out of the joke factory. Remember the prizes we are offering. In this contest there are

FIFTY NEW PRIZES

FIVE FIRST PRIZES

The five boys who send in the five best stories will each receive **TEN BOOKS** from this list. The list includes some of the best detective stories, tales of adventure, and most interesting boys' stories ever written.

TEN SECOND PRIZES

The ten boys who send in the next best stories will each receive any **FOUR BOOKS** they may select in this list.

FIFTEEN THIRD PRIZES

The fifteen boys who send us the next best stories will each receive any **THREE BOOKS** they may select in this list. The next twenty boys will receive any **TWO BOOKS** they may select in this list.

HERE ARE THE DIRECTIONS

This contest will close **SEPTEMBER 1st**. Remember, whether your story wins a prize or not, it stands a good chance of being published, together with your name.

To become a contestant for these prizes you must cut out the Prize Contest Coupon printed herewith, fill it out properly, and mail it to Nick Carter Weekly, care of Street & Smith, 238 William St., New York City, together with your story. No story will be considered that does not have this coupon accompanying it. Watch for the announcement of the prize winners in three weeks.

COUPON.

NICK CARTER WEEKLY PRIZE CONTEST No. 3.

Name.....

Street and Number.....

City or Town.....

State.....

Title of Story.....

- 1—The Boat Club.....By Oliver Optic
- 2—Cadet Kit Carey..By Lieut. Lionel Lounsberry
- 3—All Aboard.....By Oliver Optic
- 4—Lieutenant Carey's Luck,
By Lieut. Lionel Lounsberry
- 5—Now or Never.....By Oliver Optic
- 6—Captain Carey of the Gallant Seventh,
By Lieut. Lionel Lounsberry
- 7—Chased Through Norway.....By James Otis
- 8—Kit Carey's Protege,
By Lieut. Lionel Lounsberry
- 9—Try Again.....By Oliver Optic
- 10—Don Kirk, the Boy Cattle King,
By Gilbert Patten
- 11—From Tent to White House. (Boyhood and
Life of President McKinley),
By Edward S. Ellis
- 12—Don Kirk's Mine.....By Gilbert Patten
- 13—Up the Ladder.....By Lieutenant Murray
- 14—The Young Colonists. A Story of Life and
War in Africa.....G. A. Henty
- 15—Midshipman Merrill,
By Lieut. Lionel Lounsberry
- 16—The White King of Africa,
By William Murray Graydon
- 17—Ensign Merrill...By Lieut. Lionel Lounsberry
- 18—The Silver Ship.....By Leon Lewis
- 19—Jack Archer.....By G. A. Henty
- 33—Jud and Joe, Printers and Publishers,
By Gilbert Patten
- 34—The Adventures of Mr. Verdant Green,
By Cuthbert Bede, B. A.
- 35—In the Reign of Terror.....By G. A. Henty
- 36—In Barracks and Wigwam,
By William Murray Graydon
- 37—Commodore Junk...By George Manville Fenn
- 38—Gay Dashleigh's Academy Days
By Arthur Sewall
- 39—With Boer and Britisher in the Transvaal,
By William Murray Graydon
- 40—Canoe and Campfire..By St. George Rathbone
- 41—Check 2134.....By Edward S. Ellis
- 42—The Young Acrobat...By Horatio Alger, Jr.
- 43—In Southern Seas.....By Frank H. Converse
- 44—The Golden Magnet..By George Manville Fenn
- 45—Jack Wheeler; A Western Story,
By Capt. David Southwick
- 46—Poor and Proud.....By Oliver Optic
- 47—Eric Dane.....By Matthew White, Jr.
- 48—Lake Bennett's Hide-Out,
By Capt. C. B. Ashley, U. S. Scout
- 49—The Mystery of a Diamond,
By Frank H. Converse
- 50—Dean Dunham.....By Horatio Alger, Jr.
- 51—Tom Tracy.....By Arthur Lee Putnam
(Horatio Alger, Jr.)
- 52—From Farm Boy to Senator,
By Horatio Alger, Jr.
- 53—The Adventures of a New York Telegraph
Boy.....By Arthur Lee Putnam
(Horatio Alger, Jr.)
- 54—Joe Nichols; or, Difficulties Overcome,
By Alfred Oldfellow
- 55—A Voyage to the Gold Coast,
By Frank H. Converse
- 56—Nature's Young Noblemen,
By Brooks McCormick
- 57—The Gold of Flat Top Mountain,
By Frank H. Converse
- 22—The Champdoce Mystery..By Emile Gaboriau
- 24—The Detective's Dilemma..By Emile Gaboriau
- 25—The Detective's Triumph..By Emile Gaboriau
- 26—File No. 113.....By Emile Gaboriau
- 27—The Steel Necklace..By Fortuné Du Boisgobey
- 28—Under His Thumb...By Donald J. McKenzie
- 29—The Clique of Gold.....By Emile Gaboriau
- 30—The Bag of Diamonds,
By George Manville Fenn
- 31—The Red Lottery Ticket,
By Fortune Du Boisgobey
- 32—A Mysterious Case.....By K. F. Hill
- 227—From Clew to Climax....By Will N. Harben
- 225—Tracked by Fate.....By Fergus Hume
- 323—Found Dead.....By Hero Strong
- 221—Other People's Money...By Emile Gaboriau
- 219—A Hidden Clew..By Ernest De Lancey Pierson
- 217—Baron Trigault's Vengeance,
By Emile Gaboriau
- 216—The Count's Millions.....By Emile Gaboriau
- 214—The Missing Cashier,
By Ernest De Lancey Pierson
- 212—A Mystery Still....By Fortune Du Boisgobey
- 210—An Excellent Knave.....By J. F. Molloy
- 208—The Condemned Door,
By Fortune Du Boisgobey
- 206—The Portland Place Mystery,
By Ernest De Lancey Pierson
- 204—Hunted Down,
By Richard Ashton Wainwright



Contest closed, boys, but look on the opposite page.

What do you think of our new contest and prize offer? Isn't it a corker.

Get in line for another hot contest—just like the last, only hotter, if that is possible.

Prize winners in the contest that has just closed will be announced in three weeks.

Keep your eyes peeled for their names.

In the meantime get into the new contest. It's the boy who tries more than once that comes out on top. It's the boy with sand and grit that doesn't give up after one failure and finally wins the prize.

The Dying Boy's Request.

(By Louis Herzog.)

Oh, mother, listen to my ditty,
For I am growing weak,
Get papa's big sledgehammer,
And gently press me on the cheek;
Tie me to a telegraph wire,
And slowly let me fall,
Have my body pulverized,
And stuffed with codfish balls,
Put chest protectors on my feet,
And soak my head in lard,
Sell me to a bologna peddler,
For seventy-five cents a yard.

Tie me to a kicking mule,
And rub my gums with glue,
Buy me a paper of Virgin Leaf,
And give me one more chew;
Let me starve with Dr. Tanner,
Throw me in a sewer,
Let me join a circus.
Feed me on milk that's pure;
Assassinate me with a big tomato,
For I've got a terrible gall,
I'm dying with a wart on my neck,
From doing a funny fall.

Judging from Appearances.

(By Rud Peschman, Wis.)

An American who was one of a party of foreigners invited to take a trip over a certain Mexican line was sitting on the rear platform of the observation car. The train stopped to take water, and as it was getting under way again a disreputable-looking man swung himself on the bumper and started to climb over the railing. He looked like a greasy cowpuncher, only more dirty and

ragged, and the American tried to push him off. He held on, however, and began to yell in Spanish.

The American yelled back, and the two men scuffled and fought on the platform until another member of the party came out, and asked what was the trouble.

"I'm keeping this tramp from stealing a ride!" exclaimed the American.

"Nonsense!" said his friend. "You're fighting with the brakeman."

The American vowed that he would never again judge from appearances—at least in Mexico.

A Smart Irishman.

(By J. B. Pury, Ill.)

Two Irishmen, Mike and Pat by name, had lived and toiled in the old country for a good many years without making more than a meager living. One day Pat bid Mike good-by and went away. A year went by and Pat came back. He had on fine clothes and money in his pocket. Now, this made Mike curious, and he asked Pat how he got along.

Pat said:

"I went to Californy and went into the bee business and made a hundred thousand dollars in one year. You see, Mike, the bees work all day without stopping for meals."

The next day Mike bade Pat good-by and went away, and was gone a year, and when he came back he had on fine clothes with money in his pocket and when Pat saw him he wanted to know how he got along.

Mike said:

"Well, Pat, I made two hundred thousand dollars. I went into the bee business, too."

"But how did you make twice as much as I did," said Pat.

"Well, I crossed the bees with lightning bugs, and they had lamps on one end so they could see and they worked both day and night."

Not the Defendant.

(By H. C. Jones.)

I was a witness in a law suit and the lawyer for the defense had got a continuation of the case till the next day. The judge told the bailiff to bring in the prisoner, Mr. Johnson, who was accused of stealing chickens. The lawyer for the complainant had tried every way to get him to confess.

Finally the judge said:

"I believe you are the defendant in this case, are you not?"

The old negro looked at him and said:

"No, sah! Ah's nuffin ob de kin'. Ah's no such a fmg. Ah pays a lawyers over dar to look after ma defense. Ah's de gemmen wat stole de chickums."

The Sullivan Treatment.

(By Colmer Singleman, Illinois.)

My friend Casey had a friend named Sullivan, who was very sick, and as there was no one else available, Casey told the physician that he would sit up with him. Well, the doctor told Casey to administer a powder at 10 o'clock and to give him just what he could get on a dime and no more. He took a dime from his pocket and showed Casey the necessary portion, and cautioned him against giving him an overdose. Casey said he understood, and the doctor left, of course without leaving the dime.

The next morning when he called he found the man dead.

"Did you give him the dose I prescribed?" he asked.

"Of course I did. I didn't have a dime, so I put it on two nickels," said Casey.

Mississippi Skeeters.

(By Garnet S. Penbold, Can.)

The railroad station at Mississippi City is located among the pines, and the mosquitoes biting there, even in April, was enough to keep a mule moving.

After a while, we got to talking about the insects, and I asked a native of the country:

"Are they thicker than this in the summer?"

"Thicker! Why, in July there's a million to one?"

"And larger?"

"Larger? Why, sir, one of the regular skeeters of this section would carry these on his back and still fly high."

I thought I'd close him up at once and so continued:

"Now, sir, answer me truthfully: Do you believe that six of your biggest mosquitoes could kill a mule if he was tied up here?"

He looked at me in amazement for a minute, and then went to the door, and beckoned in a man who was sitting on a box.

When the man came in the native said:

"William, you remember that air roan mule o' yours?"

"I reckon I do."

"In perfect health, wasn't he?"

"He were."

"And two of them mud swamp skeeters got arter him

one morning and run him down and killed him, and devoured both hams, sucked every drop of blood in his body? Bill, speak up!"

"Stranger, if they didn't, then I hope to be chewed to rags!" said Williams, and he said it exactly like a man who wouldn't have said it if he hadn't been earnestly convinced of the fact. There was a deep silence, broken only after a long interval by the native saying:

"I've always kinder suspected that them two skeeters had assistance from a hoss fly, but I can't prove it. I kinder think the hoss fly held him down till the murder was committed."

Rib Ticklers.

(By Emil Jurgmeyer, Iowa.)

Mother: "Johnny, why didn't you tell me that you were naughty at school?"

Johnny: "'Tisn't best to tell women everything."

Inquiring Stranger: "And how is it you two boys are not at school?"

Small Boy: "Well, now, guv'nor, look at us! Do you fink anybody could teach us anything?"

He: "Man has a perfect organ of speech."

She: "Well, so has woman."

He: "Oh, no, she hasn't. Hers is made without stops."

"What is your name, my little man?"

"Willie when I'm good and William, when I get licked."

"How old are you?"

"Ask maw."

"Where do you live?"

"To home."

"You look like a bright boy."

"Tell ye, mister, I'm way out o' sight an' don't you forget it."

"Don't you think that so bright a boy as you are ought to be more mannerly?"

"Say, looky here, I'm in it, I am, an' I ain't goin' to let no old duffer pump me on private matters—by-by."

And the precocious child put his hands in his pockets and wafted himself down the street whistling, "Oh, I'm a daisy."

The kind old gentleman happened to be his uncle, just returned from a long residence abroad, and when Willie got home that night his name was William.

A Deaf Man.

(By Joe Oliver, Mich.)

Among the early settlers of Hooppole township, Posey County, Indiana, there lived a man that was very deaf. He took his ax one day and went to the woods to work. He found a tree he wanted, and went to work. Now he thought if any one came that way they would want to know what he was doing; so he said to himself:

"They will ask me what I am going to make, and I will

say 'mill-post.' Then they will ask how long it will be, and I will say up to that knot. Then they will ask how much I want for it, and I will tell them, 'Five dollars.' They will say, 'I won't give it,' and I will tell them if they won't some one else will."

After he worked a while a traveler came that way, and said, "Good-morning, sir."

Old Man: "Mill-post."

Traveler: "How far to the next town?"

Old Man: "Up to that knot."

Traveler: "Don't be a fool."

Old Man: "Five dollars."

Traveler: "If you wasn't such an old man, I would come over there and give you a good whipping."

Old Man: "If you don't, some one else will."

Cutting it Short.

(By Geo. Dye, N. J.)

A certain barber, who was possessed of great powers of gab, used to amuse his customers with his long yarns while he manipulated on their heads and faces. One day an old codger came in, took his seat and ordered a shave and hair cut. The barber went to work, and began at the same time one of his long stories to the great dissatisfaction of the old gentleman, who at length becoming irritated at him, said:

"Cut it short."

"Yes, sir," said the barber, continuing the yarn, until the old gentleman again bawled out:

"Cut it short, I say."

"Yes, sir," clipping away and gabbing the faster.

"Cut it short, cut it short, I say," says the old gent.

"Yes, sir," says the barber, going on with his story.

"Will you cut it short?" bawls the old gent, in a rage.

"Can't, sir," said the barber, "for if you look in the glass, you'll see that I've cut it all off."

Not a Good Needle.

School Teacher: "Now, Bobby, spell needle."

Bobby: "N-e-i-d-l-e, needle."

Teacher: "Wrong. There is no 'i' in needle."

Bobby: "Well, 'tain't a good needle, then."

Whistle Again.

"George, George, mind; your hat will be blown off if you lean so far out of the window!" exclaimed a fond father to his little son, who was traveling with him in a railway carriage.

Quickly snatching the hat from the head of the refractory youngster, papa hid it behind his back.

"There, now, the hat is gone!" he cried, pretending to be angry. And George immediately set up a howl. After a time the father remarked:

"Come, be quiet. If I whistle your hat will come back again."

Then he whistled, and replaced the hat on the boy's head. "There, it's back again, you see."

Afterward, while papa was talking to mamma a small, shrill voice was heard saying:

"Papa, papa, I've thrown my hat out of the window! Whistle again, will you?"

A Good Shot.

(By W. C. Hazelhurst, N. B.)

It was down in Maine, in a thickly-wooded country, that this adventure occurred. A friend of mine and I were sitting beside the fire chatting, when all at once we were startled by hearing the familiar growl of a bear. Grasping our guns, which happened to be muzzle loaders, we ran to the door, but got no farther, for there were three great bears coming toward us. My friend fired, but missed. This caused the bears to go in a bunch. Now was my chance. I thought I could not miss hitting something, so putting my gun to my shoulder and forgetting to take out the ram rod, I fired.

The shock knocked me over, but, jumping up, I looked out, and what did I see but the three bears hanging to the tree on the ramrod.

Questions and Answers.

(By Hugo McPatridge, Washington.)

He: "I was in the restaurant this morning."

She: "Did you see me there?"

He: "No; I did not go in the kitchen."

She: "Sir! I wasn't in the kitchen."

He: "Excuse me, this was your day off."

She: "Why, how dare you? I was in the dining-room eating lemon pie, and it was immense (a mince)."

He: "That's nothing. I was eating a piece of mince pie, and it was a peach."

She: "Oh, go on."

He: "I saw your brother eating a piece of gooseberry pie, and he told the waiter that he would like to see the goose that laid those berries."

She: "Yes, John is always cutting up."

He: "Yes, he is a butcher, never saw a butcher that didn't cut up."

She: "Oh! you are too fresh."

He: "Yes. I am sometimes called Salt."

He: "But to lay all joking aside, supposing you were in a small boat, with your mother, and husband, and the boat strikes against a snag and capsizes, and it was in your power to save one, which would you save?"

She: "I would save my mother."

He: "Why?"

She: "This world is wide and full of husbands, but where under the blue canopy of heaven will you find a kind, loving mother?"

He: "Excuse me until I shed a tear."

She: "Supposing that you were in a small boat with your wife and mother-in-law and the boat should strike a snag and capsize, and it was in your power to save one, which would you save?"

He: "I would save the snag."

She: "Why?"

He: "This world is wide and full of mothers-in-law and wives. But where under the blue canopy of heaven

will you find a nice, kind, loving—— Well, I should say I would save the snag."

She: "Oh, you make me tired; but, by the way, are you going down to Scandvoretuatysing's party?"

He: "Well, I should eat a tomato can! I always take well at a party."

She: "Yes, you took an overcoat at the last party."

He: "Certainly, I took an over—— Who took an overcoat?"

She: "Well, I must leave you now, for it looks like rain——"

He: "Yes, I think it will snow before morning——"

She: "How do you know?"

He: "I feel the change in my pocket."

"Calls."

(By Louis J. Herzog.)

The Reverend Mulkittle having successfully organized a church fair was a very happy man.

He had returned from the fair which was for the benefit of his church and was sitting in his library when his youngest entered.

"Where have you been, pa?"

"To the fair."

"What fair?"

"Our church fair."

"Was it a great affair?"

"I guess so."

"Did they have it out on the fair grounds and have horses and cows?"

"No, they didn't. They sold toys and things for people to eat."

"Did they sell it to the poor?"

"They sold it to anybody who had money."

"Say, papa, do you want me to be a preacher?"

"Yes, if the Lord calls you."

"Did the Lord call you, papa?"

"Yes."

"What did he say?"

"Told me to preach to the people."

"Did he tell you to preach to niggers?"

"Shut up, now."

"I thought the Lord called you the other day, didn't you?"

"What are you talking about?"

"You told ma you had a call, but you wanted \$200 more. Wouldn't they give you the \$200?"

"Didn't I tell you to hush, sir?" said the minister.

"You told me to behave myself."

"Well, see that you do."

"I wish you would tell me about that call."

"Well, a church in another town wanted me to come there and preach."

"Why didn't you go?"

"They wouldn't pay enough money."

"Call wasn't loud enough, was it, pa?"

"Well, hardly," said the minister, with a smile, "not loud enough to be interesting."

"How much money did the Lord offer you?"

"Do you see that door?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, go out and shut it."

"I want to stay in here."

"Here, I'll give you ten cents if you go away and hush."

"Call ain't loud enough," said the boy, shaking his head.

"Well, here's a quarter," said the preacher, smiling.

"Call is loud enough, I'll go."

A Letter from Slipjack Alley.

(By Wm. Tillinghast, S. C.)

Me Dear Annie: I ject received youse letter about two hours ago, and read it yesterday.

Ise gwan to tell youse about Parson Smith's invention. He ses at de lecture last night dat he has ject found out dat before he wus blind he could see berry well. What I can't understand is how Parson Smith could see before he wus blind.

Hoping dat youse ain't well, I remain, youse loving,
DRUNKARD BIBY JONES.

P. S.—Send me de razor dat I lost. I needs it berry bad.

A Few from the Joke Factory.

(By Henry Schott, N. J.)

POOR CARRIE.

Smith: "Say, Brown, did you hear of the accident that happened to Carrie Nation?"

Brown: "No; what was it?"

Smith: "Why, she dropped a hatchet on her toe and smashed two joints."

YOU CAN'T FOOL THE IRISH.

An Irishman and a Dutchman were on a boat when it was sinking, and neither knew how to swim, so just as they were passing under a bridge Pat jumped up and caught hold of it, the Dutchman, catching hold of his legs just as the boat sank.

Pat seeing that he couldn't hold on much longer, said:

"Let go, Dutchy, till I spit on my hands."

Dutchy let go and Pat was saved.

A MISTAKE.

An Irishman and a Dutchman were sitting in a restaurant when Pat said:

"I'll stand for buckwheat cakes. How many will you have? Or do you like them?"

Fritz: "Nein."

Pat: "You're blame lucky if you get three."

A Perfect Woman.

At a lecture one evening the lecturer inquired dramatically:

"Can any one in this room tell me of a perfect man?"

There was dead silence.

"Has any one," he continued, "heard of a perfect woman?" Then a patient-looking little woman in a black dress rose up at the back of the room and answered:

"There was one. I've often heard of her, but she's dead now. She was my husband's first wife."

Amateur Detective Work.

Boys, in reading one of the Nick Carter stories did you ever try to think ahead and guess who was the criminal in the case?

Each of the readers has a chance to find out how good a detective he is.

He has the facts of the case laid before him just as Nick Carter himself has.

Of course, he has not got Nick's experience or wonderful detective instinct. Still, he can prove whether or not he is a good detective by trying to decide in his own mind what the solution of the mystery is before he has read to the end of the story. The earlier in the story he is able to make his guess and the more accurate it is, the better detective he is.

We want to see what sort of detectives the readers of the NICK CARTER WEEKLY are.

We want one and all of you to write to us, telling us whether you were able to solve the mystery that Nick Carter had to solve before reading to the end of any of the stories.

Tell us how far you read before you arrived at your decision, and *just what points guided you in making your decision.* Your letters will be printed in this column.

Our Amateur Detective Circle is rapidly growing larger. This week we offer you the letters of three of the more recent candidates for admission. Here are their letters:

Editor of Nick Carter Weekly—

Dear Sir: In opening this letter, I would like to state that I consider "Nick Carter and the Guilty Governor" one of the finest detective stories ever written.

In that adventure Nick showed his wonderful skill and daring to splendid advantage.

Having read the previous stories, I saw of course that the Governor of Perm must be caught and brought to justice sooner or later, but I was greatly surprised at the speed with which it was brought about.

Nick had before him a tremendous problem. He knew who his criminal was. The puzzle was how to get him in his power.

The man he was after was the most powerful man in that section of the country.

He could have had Nick seized, thrown into prison and perhaps put to death.

I confess that I saw no way in which Nick could succeed in his attempt. But there are few problems that Nick cannot solve.

He went at it in his characteristic way and the readers of this weekly know how it ended. With best wishes for Nick, Chick and Patsy, as well as Ida Jones, I remain,
Yours truly,

Sedgewick, L. I.

JOHN L. LOMERGAN.

That's the stuff, John. You may not have solved the problem without reading to the end of the story, but you have written a rattling good letter. Good luck to you.

Here's another from the Sunny South.

Editor of Nick Carter Weekly—

Dear Sir: I hailed with joy the announcement that you were going to print letters from amateur detectives. I think that the idea is a splendid one, and I hasten

to enroll myself a member of the Nick Carter Amateur Detective Circle.

I have just been glancing over "Nick Carter's Queer Chase," and "Nick Carter and the Guilty Governor." I was not very successful in my first attempts at amateur detective work, but I am going to try again.

The only way to win in anything is to have a little of the grit and determination that the Carters possess. Am I not right?

Yours truly,

Richmond, Va.

BERKELY GREEN.

Are you right? Of course you are. You hit the nail right on the head. Try it again, Bert. You are the kind of boy who makes a success of anything he attempts.

Here's a third letter. This one comes from New England:

Editor Nick Carter Weekly—

Dear Sir: I tried my hand at amateur detective work recently, and I think that I was fairly successful.

In the story of "Nick Carter's Ocean Chase," I had decided before I had read very far that Palog was the guilty man.

He confessed himself a thief when he told how he had stolen the diamond from the poor savages in Borneo.

If he was wicked enough to steal from them, certainly he was wicked enough to steal from his own government.


Then his account of his discovery of the loss of the diamond looked to me a trumped-up story.

Yours truly,

Meriden, Conn.

RICHARD STOWE.

Well done, Dick. You show that you have plenty of the detective instinct.

 \$1 worth of Tricks & Make-ups sent postpaid for 25 cents stamps or silver. A nice Moustache or full Beard, Irish or Hide Whiskers, any color, bottle Spirit Gum to stick them on. Box of Burnt Cork to blacken up. 1 in. Rubber Mouth, big teeth, secret & apparatus for performing the great vanishing half-dollar trick. This big offer is to get your address to send my large Ills. cat'g of plays, wigs, tricks & agts. latest novelties. Mention paper you saw this in and I will also put in a Heavy GOLD plate Racer King FREE, send also. Address Chas. Marshall, Mfr., Lockport, N.Y.

NICK CARTER WEEKLY.

(LARGE SIZE.)

The Best Detective Stories in the World.

- 246—Nick Carter on the Racecourse; or, Crooked Work in the Paddock.
- 247—Nick Carter's Black Clew; or, Heard in the Dark.
- 248—Nick Carter's Strange Vacation; or, The Town That Was Hoodooed.
- 249—Nick Carter Investigating a Lea'; or, One Page Missing.
- 250—Nick Carter's Double Clew; or, The Fatal Resemblance.
- 251—Nick Carter and "The Brown Robin"; or, The Unknown Letter Writer.
- 252—Nick Carter Tracking a Traitor; or, Night Work in a Country Town.
- 253—Nick Carter's Tunnel Mystery; or, Lost: \$200,000 in Gold.
- 254—Nick Carter's Queer Murder Case; or, Under a Terrible Suspicion.
- 255—Nick Carter Challenged; or, Fighting a Powerful Enemy.
- 256—Nick Carter and Arizona Jake; or, The Big Westerner's Part in the Cooper Suicide.
- 257—Nick Carter in the Council of the Reds; or, The Plot of the Anarchists.
- 258—Nick Carter and the Secret of the Tin Box; or, The Man Who Stole His Name.
- 259—Nick Carter's Fire Trail; or, Thwarting a Villain's Plot.
- 260—Nick Carter on the Track of the Freight Thieves; or, The Boldest Gang in New York.
- 261—Nick Carter on the Track of a Gentleman Burglar; or, Robbing a Thief.
- 262—Nick Carter Attacked; or, The Desperate Plot on the Detective's Life.
- 263—Nick Carter on the Trail of the River Pirates; or, The Dangerous Work on the River Front.
- 264—Nick Carter and the King of the Tramp Thieves; or, Patsy's Lone Hand Against the Hoboes.
- 265—Nick Carter and the Man in the Cask; or, Patsy's Terrible Predicament.
- 266—Nick Carter and the Shoplifters; or, The Automobile Clew.
- 267—Nick Carter's Ocean Chase; or, The Missing Crown Diamond.
- 268—Nick Carter and the Broken Dagger; or, The Black Man from Borneo.
- 269—Nick Carter's Advertisement; or, A New Way to Catch a Criminal.
- 270—Nick Carter and the Nihilists; or, The Mine Under the Grand Duke's Palace.
- 271—Nick Carter in the Convict Gang; or, Ida Jones to the Rescue.
- 272—Nick Carter and the Guilty Governor; or, The American Detective and the Russian Officer.
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